

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Theses and Dissertations

3-8-2022

Bombazo Epistemology a Syllabus of Survival: Dismantling Settler Colonialism's Philosophy in the Stolen Land

Armen Alvarez

Illinois State University, armen.alvarez@me.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Alvarez, Armen, "Bombazo Epistemology a Syllabus of Survival: Dismantling Settler Colonialism's Philosophy in the Stolen Land" (2022). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1652.

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1652>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUREd@ilstu.edu.

BOMBAZO EPISTEMOLOGY A SYLLABUS OF SURVIVAL: DISMANTLING SETTLER
COLONIALISM'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE STOLEN LAND

ARMEN ÁLVAREZ

102 Pages

Eurocentric educational philosophy has functioned as an anticipatory regime creating racial, economic, historical, sociopolitical, and intellectual separation and imposing dominant knowledge systems. In 2021, American and Hispanic empires rejected organic movements from scholars and academic activists for embracing a vision of the world outside the boundaries of Eurocentrism, a trend that has shaken the foundations of Eurocentric academia. More than ever, the Bomba Ceremony has emerged as a tradition that substantiates Puerto Rico's identity, awakening the consciousness of TransIndigenous and transcolonial intersubjectivities. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I conceptualize the logic of white supremacy through the lenses of white settler colonialism, which I theorize how, as a way of survival, the cultural interpretation of Puerto Rican identity navigated the epistemic, ontological, and axiological boundaries of transcolonialism. Secondly, I contextualize how Puerto Ricans resisted Eurocentrism, revealing the traditions of the Bomba ceremony connecting the Islanders with the Diaspora that was forced to migrate. The collective memory of Bombazo, which was clandestine and considered rebellious for centuries, constructed strong alliances between Taínos and Indigenous peoples of Africa within the boundaries of an imagined free Puerto Rico and the one colonized. But nowadays, Bombazo's epistemology is leading Puerto Ricans to a decolonizing path connecting Puerto Ricans from the Caribbean to all Diaspora worldwide.

KEYWORDS: anticipatory regimes, Bombazo, Bomba ceremony, guerrilla pedagogy, transcolonialism, Indigenous intersubjectivities, white settler colonialism

BOMBAZO EPISTEMOLOGY A SYLLABUS OF SURVIVAL: DISMANTLING SETTLER
COLONIALISM'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE STOLEN LAND

ARMEN ÁLVAREZ

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration and Foundation

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2023

Copyright 2023 Armen Álvarez

BOMBAZO EPISTEMOLOGY A SYLLABUS OF SURVIVAL: DISMANTLING SETTLER
COLONIALISM'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE STOLEN LAND

ARMEN ÁLVAREZ

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Pamela Hoff, Chair

Eileene Tejada, Co-chair

Rima Brusi Gil De Lamadrid

Diane Renn

Gavin Weiser

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The ancestral memory is fundamental to live authentically and not under the shadows of dominating narratives. Memory is what keeps my essence of life alive. Every culture embodies fragments of knowledge that can pass from generation to generation as oral history.

Unfortunately, whoever dominates the narrative, also dominates history. I found that the narrative and discourses about my present were hijacked by dominating discourses in the past. I realized that Indigenous wisdom received from my ancestors is a powerful weapon against colonial structures of knowing. In the familial space of grandparents, parents, and family is where the true essence of life resides. I have brought into this study the emancipatory discourses that have been debunking dominating notions of power, displacing them with a manifesto and manifestation of love for the world.

In 2005, I encountered an elder on my first visit to New Mexico – one of the most mystic Indigenous lands on Earth. In that encounter, that elder asked me, “*What tribe are you from?*” I smiled and told him, “*I am Puerto Rican,*” to which he replied, “*I thought you had been exterminated. How many are there like you?*” Those words have spoken deeply to my conscience every day since then; I realized that I had been living clandestinely to survive. This conversation changed my life and gave me purpose. I was walking the baby steps of awakening my consciousness, which was absorbed in colonial lethargy as impostor syndrome. Years later, after almost finishing my course work, I met a visiting professor at Illinois State University who wanted to do a study about the Taínos. I told her that ... “*the Taínos have died,*” as I had learned in public schools in Puerto Rico. When the professor saw me, she seemed very shocked ... I told her, “*I have three races.*” I remember the reaction she had to my words. She said to me that the Indigenous tribes die when they die in the hearts of their descendants. She told me, “*You are not*

only a descendant—you are a Taína...Look at your eyes, look at your hair, look at yourself.

Claim it!” This was the kind of affirmation that I was looking for all my life. Immediately after, I decided to recruit a committee that could accept my research. I found faculty who believed in my research and shared many struggles against the status quo—the academy.

After remembering the memory and oral history of my family, I realized that my ancestors prepared me for the world, even while the academy trained me for a job. The huge difference is that my family believed in my capacity to embody and carry the legacy of my people, whereas the academy subjectifies me as someone who needs to be fixed and civilized. In my saddest moments of uncertainty, I bring to my memory oral history. I look to familial photos, my girls’ arts as a way to cope with generational trauma seeing that Indigeneity is worthy and has let me to break through to the chains of ignorance. I preach to myself, I anoint me with oil as a remembrance who I am, where I am coming from, and where I am going.

In this memory piece, I unveil my struggle, my passion, and my truth so that you can understand the obscurantism and evil forces of colonialism. Each *Bombazo* exposes where the academy must be impeached because of its hegemonic claim over what knowledge is. My study is intended to unveil clandestine epistemologies and dismantle of white settler colonialism’s education philosophy in the stolen land. My study frames the “articles of impeachment” for which the academy must go to trial. From now on, I want you readers to enter the *Batey* and listen to my *areito* as a *Bombazo* where the philosophy of the white settler is on trial. The ancestors seek healing, but if the academy resist to remain in power, it should expect a challenge. *Bomba* traditions and *Bombazos* are no longer clandestine. They are part of the TransIndigenous ways of knowing. Here is a *Bombazo*:

Con el conocimiento adquirido de mis ancestros. Aquí te va esta Bomba:

*“A línea no voy mamá,
A la línea no voy papá,
A la línea no voy más ná,
Ellos son muchos y me quieren pegar, Ellos son muchos y me quieren pegar,
Yo salí para ver a Piri,
Y el pañuelo se me voló,
Yo le canto en español,
Para que todos me puedan entender,
Ellos son muchos y me quieren pegar, Ellos son muchos y me quieren pegar,
Y de muerte. (Paracumbé – Bomba Y Plena, 1987).*

This study represents a huge ethical responsibility, which I did not take lightly. I seek systemic transformation by helping to dismantle the white supremacist philosophy in academia. The lessons of white supremacy create a mindset of colonialism, genocide, and epistemic apartheid. This continued oppression must not be allowed to persist.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to recognize the support of all the people, community, family, and even those who are going to benefit from this work. Without your support, mentorship, prayers, good vibes, and thoughts, this work would not have become a reality, either physically or spiritually.

First, I am deeply honored to have a group of scholars who offered not only academic rigor, but also the transcendency of the spiritual and cosmological realms of the Indigenous people. My sincere gratitude goes to you. Your wisdom, experience, and expertise will always be in my heart and soul.

Second, the coherence and content presentation of this work, while partly academically oriented, also presents intersubjectivity to honor all the ancestors that returned to Mother Earth and are seeing us from the cosmos. My committee backed up my approach in the best and most crucial moment of my life.

Third, I want to give thanks to my family for supporting me by serving as readers, researchers, and scholars. I am glad that you did not give up on me!

Fourth, I would also like to thank my editorial line up. She understands me and ensured that my work would be polished and understandable to general and scholarly communities.

Last, but not least, I want to inspire all the Taínos and Afro-descendants that are going to continue working to decolonize Puerto Rico. Because Borinquen deserves to be FREE!

¡Con amor profundo y eterno...!

A. A.

CONTENTS

	Page
AUTHOR’S NOTE	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
CONTENTS	v
FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER I: OUTLOOK	1
Background	2
Problem statement	5
Research Purpose	8
Research Questions	9
Theoretical, Conceptual, and Contextual Frameworks	9
Intersectionality as a conceptual framework	10
Bombazo memory as theoretical framework	11
Settler colonialism	12
Abyssal thinking	12
Significance	13
Terminology	14
Organization of the Study	16
Chapter Summary	17
CHAPTER II: CONTEXTS	19
Introduction	19
History of Indigenous Systems of Knowledge in Puerto Rico	20

Bomba, Bomberos, and Bombazo roots	23
<i>Bomba</i> as institution, <i>Bombazo</i> as epistemological resistance	25
<i>Bombazo</i> and diaspora	28
<i>Bombazo</i> memory as theoretical framework	29
History of White Settler Colonialism	32
Anticipatory regimens and superstructures as white settler colonialism	33
White settler colonialism principles	34
Eurocentric academia and white settler colonialism	40
Abyssal thinking	41
Modern knowledge and modern law	43
Ecologies of knowledges	44
Epistemic apartheid and logics of privilege	45
Chapter Summary	48
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	50
Critical Discourse Analysis	51
Qualitative Research	52
Conceptual Dissertation	52
Definition	54
Research design	54
Data collection	55
Research Questions	56
Positionality	56
Chapter Summary	60

CHAPTER IV: UNPACKING	61
Introduction	61
Research problem	61
Research Inquiries	62
Intersectional conceptual framework	64
<i>Bombazo</i> epistemology, and epistemic apartheid	67
Abyssal thinking	67
Ecologies of knowledge	68
Theme 1: Eurocentric ideology and Puerto Rico’s higher education	69
Theme 2: Barriers to a sovereign epistemic social justice stance	71
Control of knowledge	72
Colonial subjugation	72
Theme 3: Fascist-patriotic education and approximation to whiteness	74
Hierarchy of knowledge, as national identity’s proximity to whiteness	75
Hispanophilia	76
Americanization	77
Theme 4: <i>Bombazo</i> Epistemology a Syllabus of Survival	78
<i>Bomba</i> ceremony as resistance to white settler colonialism	80
Chapter Summary	81
CHAPTER V: DISSENT	83
Future research and activism	87
REFERENCES	88

FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1: Intersectionality as a conceptual framework	10
Figure 2: Bombazo epistemology as a theoretical framework	31
Figure 3: Settler colonialism principles	35
Figure 4: Abyssal thinking	42

CHAPTER I: OUTLOOK

“With the consolidation of the new state, the United States of America, by 1790, the opportunity for Indigenous nations to negotiate the alliances with competing European empires against the despised settlers who intended to destroy them was greatly narrowed. Nevertheless, Indigenous nations had defied the founding of the independent United States in a manner that allowed for their survival and created a legacy – a culture of resistance – that has persisted. By the time of the birth of the US republic, Indigenous peoples in what is now the continental United States had been resisting European colonization for two centuries. They have no choice given the aspirations of the colonizers: total elimination of Native nations or survival. Precolonial Indigenous societies were dynamic social systems with adaptation built into them. Fighting for survival did not require cultural abandonment. On the contrary, the cultures used already existing strengths, such as diplomacy and mobility, to develop new mechanisms required to live in nearly constant crisis. There is always a hard core of resistance in that process. Still, the culture of resistance also includes accommodations to the colonizing social order, including absorbing Christianity into existing religious practices, using colonizer’s language, and intermarrying with settlers and, more importantly, with other oppressed groups, such as escaped African slaves. Without the culture of resistance, surviving Indigenous peoples under US colonization would have been eliminated through individual assimilation” – Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz (2014, p. 79) *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*

In this deliverance and reminiscence, I honor the ancestors and those who shed their blood to give us the life that Caribbean people have today and explore the long-standing oppression of Indigenous epistemologies in Puerto Rico that have resisted the philosophical canon of white settler colonialism. I am centering my study on the Taíno and Black epistemologies, including the *Bombazo* epistemology from the *Bomba* tradition, that have given Puerto Ricans our unique cultural identity and philosophy. This work is based on and reconceptualizes what it means for Indigenous peoples living in a transcolonial context to survive the brutality of white settler colonialism. *Bomberos* of the *Bomba* tradition negotiated the Eurocentric structure and systems created *Bombazos*, the epistemologies of survival.

To accomplish this aim, this study unveils the ascendant ancestral knowledge connected to the Taíno land, not as an alternative knowledge, but rather as a shared social consciousness and ubiquitous source of wisdom of the Taíno and African diasporic alliance that will serve in

this study to emancipate stolen lands of the Caribbean as a space of praxis and contestation. From this point on, you are entering the *Batey* where the *Bomba* ceremony begins delivering a living word as *Bombazo*. *Bombazo* epistemology is designed to guide, instruct, bring truth, and reconceptualize the dominating narratives over which Puerto Ricans formerly had no control, but now do. With the permission of the ancestors and knowledge holders of the *Bomba*, here is my *Bombazo*.

Background

My study is centered at the boundaries of history and power in the Caribbean, a contested space and place where white settler colonialism has tried to silence the past to control the future (Trouillot, 1995). White settlers came to what is now known as Turtle Island, imposing a Eurocentric civilization that used the academy, shaped by Eurocentric thought, as the apparatus to implement structures and systems of oppression in grade schools, universities, churches, and legislation (Althusser, 1970). Because First Nation people in the Caribbean have been silenced, ostracized, neglected, misrepresented, and intentionally omitted from research, I aim to give the collective consciousness and memories I inherited from my ancestral Indigenous knowledge to the world in a way suitable for us. Understanding this reality, I analyze this phenomenon through Indigenous lenses using critical discourse analysis (CDA), an approach that aligns with the study of conceptual and contextual phenomena, as well as the study of Puerto Rico's ideology and polity that negotiated education grounded in the logic of white settler colonialism.

As the United States transitioned from the Trump Administration to the Biden Administration, white supremacists blamed the aggressive demonstrations that occurred in many of the metropolitan cities in the United States and Latin America in reaction to the murder of George Floyd to emancipatory theories such as critical race theory (CRT), feminist radical

theory, and intersectionality (Bell, 1970; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2019; Crenshaw et al., 1996; Morgan, 2022; Rufo, 2021). *Bomba* and *Bombazo* are a part of these resistance movements. *Bombazos* are epistemologies of rebellion against Puerto Rico’s colonialism that are expressed in part by the sound of the drums, cuás, maracas, and guiros.

Here is an excerpt of the *Bombazo* dedicated to George Floyd by late Hector Tito Matos, a Grammy-nominated *Bomba y Plena* musician:

“The Death of Another Black Man” *Mataron a otro negro en el medio de la pandemia,*
“And for Trump (the pig) it’s like a comedy” *Y al puerco de Trump esto parece comedia*
(Rosenberg, 2020).

Examining the origins of *Bomba* and the *Bombazo* musical discourse that serves as guidance and a way to transmit news reveals a prophetic word given to the *pueblo* by “knowledge holders” for survival and protection from white settlers. Academic activists and knowledge holders of the epistemologies of *Bomba* as *Bombazo* have guided Puerto Ricans to see beyond the imposed colorblind structural systems of Eurocentrism. Even when *Bomba* is categorized as a music genre, for the purposes of this study, I theorize the origins of *Bomba* as a ceremony in a context of epistemological construction. Because *Bombazo* not only is a lyric for a performative folklore, but also embodies the alliance between Taínos and Blacks to oppose slavery. I study this phenomenon as an Indigenous experience in a transcolonial context outside the Eurocentric framework that idolizes the overstory of colonialism.

In January 2021, the Trump Administration’s advisory 1776 Committee issued its “1776 Report.” A document that in 41 pages demands a patriotic “restoration of American education” grounded on a history of the founding fathers’ principles and the Federalist Papers (The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission, 2021) and accuses utopian agendas of fostering the

divisions in America. In December 2021, Hispanic scholars released *España, la primera globalización*, a documentary that romanticizes the Spanish Empire's horrific past of genocide, land dispossession, and *mestizaje* as a cultural exchange between two worlds. The film gives the impression that Indigenous Blacks from Africa gave consent to be kidnapped and extracted from their epistemologies, ontologies, and axiology to work as slaves for capitalist societies that only supported the logics of white settler colonialism. In the same way, Indigenous people in the Americas supposedly gave permission to white settler colonialists to brutally enculturate them to European customs with acts that included the rape of our mothers and grandmothers, and the exploitation of Caribbean woman. Among many of their horrific claims, Hispanic scholars glorify the process of rape as a beneficial *mestizaje*—the most important legacy of Hispanidad in the makeup of Latin America is today (Barea & Espada, 2022; López-Linares, 2021).

Both Hispanic and American empires are trying to legitimate the brutality of colonization and white settler colonialism under a philosophical context establishing the Eurocentric academy as the only producer of truth, knowledge, and morals to which lesser civilizations need to assimilate (Ani, 1994; Santos, 2014). For centuries, the imperialist soft power of philosophical thought seemed innocent, part of cultural diplomacy. In reality, a new discursive formation intersected with the discursive power of empire through the university as a supposedly unbiased and neutral arbiter of knowledge (Bascara, 2014; Chatterjee, & Maira, 2014; Goodenow, 2018). Empires used legislation, such as the 1507 Laws of Burgos that allowed Hispanic colonizers to convert the Indigenous people to Christianity and the United States' Morrill Act of 1867, which established land-grant colleges on Indigenous lands, to enact their imperial hegemonies. These types of efforts have endured and continue today, thus perpetuating colonialization (Ani, 1994; Grosfoguel et al., 2016). Therefore, the main goal of this study is cross-examine Hispanic and

American scholars' arguments against epistemologies outside the boundaries of Eurocentric academia that are expressed in the "1776 Report" and *España, la primera globalización* (BBC News, 2020; Haczek, 2022; Hola!, 2022)

For years, Eurocentric scholars have characterized the dispossession and stealing of lands in the Americas as a process of discovery and modernization, when in fact the process was genocidal, macabre, and inhuman. Still, intentional, or not, narratives about the history of colonization that started in the Caribbean are often overlooked in the overarching discourses, a circumstance that requires a conceptual shift to focus on the full history of the region and the power dynamics at play. In fact, it is impossible to address underlying causes and effects of European settler colonialism without speaking about the Caribbean. With this broader historical context, the 13 Caribbean colonial-state islands will be in a better position to contest the presence of white settler colonialism from the empire states of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Problem statement

Puerto Rico is the oldest colonial-state in the world. For 500 years, Puerto Ricans have remained under epistemic, ontological, and axiological violence, a legacy of imperial Spanish rule and the continued oppression wrought by Americanization. In particular, the negative impact of the imposition of Eurocentric epistemologies on the educational system of Puerto Rico has perpetuated the systemic, violent inequalities that maintain it as a colony. Western empires have used educational structures and systems to institutionalize and normalize oppressive, violent pedagogy centered in *blanqueamiento* and *epistemicide* (Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid, 2011; Godreau, 2015; Ramos-Rosado, 2011; and Tejada, 2019). White settlers' callous operations in the Americas racialized academic structures that resulted in the dehumanization of Black and

Indigenous people. The Eurocentric academy was crucial for white settler colonialization, which suppressed our ancestral epistemologies, such as *Bombazo* under the *Bomba* tradition (Tejada, 2019). Within the critical perspective of white settler colonialism, scholars can dismantle the structural and systemic inequities that perpetuate colonialism, demanding sovereignty, dignity, social justice, and peace.

To dismantle the white philosophical canon as the hegemonic power dominating the stolen lands of Borinquen and the Americas, it is important to examine the violent origins of colonization that continue to create an impact today. Wallerstein (1974) and Quijano (2000) argue that the Western colonial worldview has created stratified structures of inequality based on institutionalized exploitation. The white canon established the political, economic, and philosophical structure whereby only European states used race as a taxonomy to exploit bodies, creating a hierarchy as a central structure to sustain capitalist economies. This perspective implies that Western-centered societies could perpetuate global power relations for centuries in the Americas. Quijano and Wallerstein (1992) state that *Americanity*, a Eurocentric capitalist concept, calls for the creation of a modern world system that required geographic expansion and labor control methods, paving the way for the core-states of the new capitalist world economy in the Americas.

It is important to unravel notions rooted in the logic of white supremacy that uses education as an apparatus to promote the interests of the white ruling class by alienating and enslaving nonwhites (Althusser, 1970; Chatterjee & Maira, 2014; Duany, 2002; Godreau, 2015; Grande, 2018; Lloréns, 2014; Rodríguez, 2012). The strong, whitewashing *blanqueamiento* legacy of Spanish rule and the Apostolic Catholic Church is still at the forefront of Puerto Rican narratives through an educational system that perpetuates monolithic white culture.

Understanding that *blanqueamiento* is an institutional, academic plan through which Eurocentric nation-states force colonized territories to portray their people as a mix, or *mestizaje* with the white race, prevents nonwhite people from ever embracing their Indigeneity or African ancestry. Thus, Latinization and Americanization as global forces centered on the white race as superior, are seen as providing the best opportunities for economic advancement. In contrast, Indigenous and Black roots are seen as an obsolete part of our history that no longer represents the Puerto Rican cultural identity, work that started with the first arrival of white settler colonialists and that continues today in the Eurocentric propaganda of the “1776 Report” by American scholars and by Hispanics lecturers with the documentary *España, la primera globalización* (López-Linares, 2021; The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission, 2021).

Despite all these measures and institutionalized efforts, it is essential to understand that white supremacy failed in implementing a New World philosophy that completely erased the ancestral knowledge that was already in place from 2,000 B.C. and continues to sustain the Indigenous people today (Rouse, 1993). After 500 years of colonization, white supremacists failed to kill the Taíno people and culture. We survived different kinds of genocide, ones that physically killed Caribbean people, yes, but also the genocide that happens when popular narratives and, most dangerously, academic scholarship intentionally omit or tell the story of Caribbean people without their input.

The memory of *Bomba* tradition is a ceremony of the alliance between Taíno and the African diaspora that has sustained the ancestral consciousness in resistance to the colonizer (Tejada, 2019). Today’s Boricuas’ traditions are the result of the ancestral memory passed from the collective consciousness of Indigenous foundations to the current generation of Boricuas in Puerto Rico and the diaspora (Anatol, 2015; Bascomb, 2019; Benítez-Rojo, 1985; Birkenmaier,

2020; Botkin, 2017; Brusi Gil De Lamadrid, 2021; Díaz-Quñones, 1993; Feliciano-Santos, 2021; Hamilton, 2019; Johnson, 2018; Khan, 2020; Lara, 2020; Lloréns, 2014; Negrón-Montaner, 2009; Ramos-Rosado, 2011; Reyes-Santos, 2015; Ricourt, 2016; Tejada, 2019; and Zien, 2017). Decolonization goes beyond the imposed boundaries of the Latino/Hispanic and American identities, which includes any geopolitical, nation-state hegemony, economic, or sociohistorical ties with the tumultuous colonial past. In this study, I intended to resurrect the broken memory, shake us from the amnesiac lethargy in which the violence of colonization holds Taíno people, who may be afraid to claim their Indigenous identity, sovereignty, self-determination, and decolonization as the First Nation of Puerto Rico.

Research Purpose

My dissertation is not a traditional dissertation because the primary purpose of this paper is to provide critical insights into the perspective that the Eurocentric academy does not hold an exclusive and absolute purchase on philosophical thought and ways of knowing of the world. There are other philosophies and ways of knowing that also contribute to the concepts that gives us an understanding of the world today, such as Indigenous ways of knowing (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Grosfoguel et al., 2018; Mays, 2021; and Santos, 2014). My main argument does not rely on a nihilistic denial of the dominating worldview and the violent impact of invasions empires; rather, it is the metaphysical truth based on the knowledge that a white monolithic society does not exist as the only truth. More specifically, I resist and contest the dominant, dystopic narratives that have portrayed Taínos as uncivilized, noble savages and the utopic discourses about the Indigenous land as virgin wilderness that were empty spaces ready to be occupied by white settlers. While understanding that my theorization of this phenomenon is key to the scholarship of decolonization, I aim to go beyond and seek transformation, which embodies an

unapologetic action of contesting, disrupting, and dismantling white supremacy's philosophy in academia.

Research Questions

I recognize that the imposition of the Eurocentric academy has been prolonged and responsible for long-term issues, such as *blanqueamiento*, genocide, and scholarly genocide in Borinquen. Consequently, dismantling this educational philosophy is crucial for social justice efforts to situate Indigenous epistemologies as sovereign in the didactic foundation's spaces, where decolonization is the beginning of such sovereignty beyond of the boundaries of the imperialistic hegemonies. To achieve this, I explore the following research questions:

1. How have the logics of Eurocentric academia, along with white settler colonial ideology (philosophy) and polity, functioned to frame didactic philosophy in Puerto Rico?
2. How have the competing white settler colonial legacies of Hispanic/Latinization and Americanization shaped academic theory in Puerto Rico?
3. What discourses have been used to erase and make invisible Taíno and African epistemological legacies in Puerto Rico identity and education?
4. How can the alliance of Afro-Taíno epistemologies emancipate current educational philosophy in Puerto Rico?

These research questions disrupt the taken-for-granted ways of conceptualizing the history of Puerto Rico as objective, neutral, and within the logic of white settler society.

Theoretical, Conceptual, and Contextual Frameworks

It is necessary to understand the bodily dimensions of whiteness in the context of dominating epistemic discourses, and Eurocentric curricula, forcing a white cultural identity. It is

imperative to understand that the Americas were built on stolen land, genocide, historical genocide, and macabre structures aimed at eliminating Indigenous civilizations. European settlers established despotic systems based on social structures to maintain white privilege and power (Grosfoguel, 2013; Quijano, 2000; Santos, 2014; Wallerstein, 1974). The academy and church were crucial in creating these new cultural formations, erasing Indigenous knowledge, exoticizing and dehumanizing the other (Duany, 2002; Malavet, 2004)—all that was/is not white or adored by whiteness. Following is a brief description of the conceptual lenses in the context of intersectionality.

Intersectionality as a conceptual framework

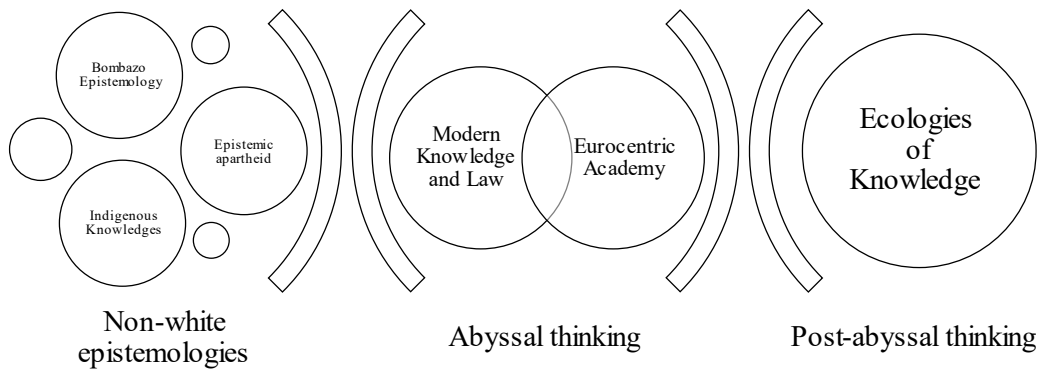


Figure 1: Intersectionality as a conceptual framework

Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to explain the process where marginalized bodies not only experience oppression, but also have a common oppressor. My study intersects in the application of theoretical, conceptual, and contextual frameworks that relies on contesting white settler, Eurocentric knowledge systems as a universal worldview (Ani,

1994; Grosfoguel, 2013; Santos, 2014). I use three different lenses to unpack how white settler knowledge systems marginalized Taínos as the First Nation peoples of Borinquen and the African diaspora. Figure 1., shows conceptual and theoretical frameworks in a context of intersectionality. This is expanded under the next chapter. Following is a brief description of the first lens.

Bombazo memory as theoretical framework

Mays (2021), Reyes-Santos (2015), and Tejada (2019) recognize that to address the historical past of colonization, it is necessary to understand the diverse context of colonial experiences of *pueblos originarios* and Black people brought from Africa. Benítez-Rojo (1985) explained that process in his seminal work, *Las Islas que se repiten*. Recognizing that shared past means that there are many areas of intersection—political, economic, socially, and cultural—where Indigenous people as Black Indigenous people from African can navigate beyond of the boundaries of white settler colonialism. The *Bomba* ceremony served to unite Taínos and Blacks in the context of transcolonialism. Taíno men were decimated by the Spaniards, and Taíno women did not provide enough labor to work on the demands of the exploitation of the land. Thus, Black Indigenous people were kidnapped from Africa and shared the *Batey*, forming a space and place of congregation and communicated epistemic thoughts through the *Bombazo* lyrics to guide and protect *el pueblo* (Baralt, 1985). This is crucial, since under transcolonial lenses, marginalized groups do not want to perpetuate colonial practices of elimination, as sometimes has happened, e.g., Puerto Rican claims of Taíno roots to erase Blackness and vice versa. A process of healing forces the Caribbean people to seek emancipation beyond of the forced nation-state and diasporic boundaries imposed by hegemonies. Following is a brief description of the second lens.

Settler colonialism

European colonizers settled in the Americas as a hegemonic power using the Eurocentric academy and territorial expansion to justify modernism and perpetual colonization (Quijano, 2000; Wallerstein, 1974). The colonization imposed political, economic, financial, and didactic structures in which the existing Indigenous and Black civilizations had only one option—serve, assimilate, and uphold white culture or die. White settler colonialism works by replacing Indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that develops a distinctive identity and sovereignty (Bhambra, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 1999). White settler colonialism, unlike importers, refugees, emigrants, or other forms of colonization, seek to occupy and affirm sovereignty over Indigenous lands permanently under the concept that they have landed on *terra nullus*, i.e., empty space, “no man’s land” or “no country.” Now, I briefly touch on the third and last lens that helps to understand white settler colonialism logics and intersectionality.

Abyssal thinking

Santos’ (2006) point of departure from the modern Western thinking is based on white supremacy that uses an epistemological division that operates through a system of visible and invisible distinctions or “the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones.” The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the reality of “the other side of the line” (p. 45). According to Santos (2006), abyssal thinking is a line that divides the two realms, with one as the invisible alternative; I maintain that the other side of the line is invisible but “parallel” and analogous because the living circumstances are not optional to the survivors that are in that space because it is their reality. I fundamentally agree that the artificial distinction made by white

supremacy is of the impossibility of coexistence or copresence across the two sides of the line. The tension between the two realms resides in the ideological and philosophical polity accepted as knowledge. This is important to break down because there are different emancipatory discourses and different dominating discourses on each side, although the polity that controls both realms is whiteness. Using the three theoretical lenses discussed, a deep understanding about the complexity of the *Bombazo* as an epistemology that has resisted structural oppressions of white settler colonialism will be possible.

Significance

The significance of this study relies on unraveling the notions rooted in the logic of white supremacy that uses education as an apparatus to promote the interests of the white ruling class by alienating and enslaving nonwhites (Althusser, 1970; Chatterjee & Maira, 2014; Duany, 2002; Godreau, 2015; Grande, 2018; Lloréns, 2014; Rodríguez, 2012). The strong whitewashing *blanqueamiento* legacy of Spanish rule and the Apostolic Catholic Church is still at the forefront of Puerto Rican narratives through an educational system that perpetuates the monolithic white culture. *Blanqueamiento* is an institutional academic plan whereby Eurocentric nation-states force colonized territories to portray their people as the result of mixing or *mestizaje* with the white race, thus preventing colonized people from embracing their Indigeneity or African ancestry. Thus, Latinization and Americanization as global forces centered on the white racial superiority, are seen as providing the best opportunities for economic advancement. In contrast, Indigenous and Black roots are seen as an obsolete part of our history that no longer represent the Puerto Rican cultural identity.

Terminology

- **Ancestors.** Elders, Knowledge Holders, community leaders in the Bomba ceremony tradition that carrier the Institutional Knowledge of Bomba.
- **Anticipatory regime.** Critical forms of imagination and anticipation – particularly those which work in the realm of the ‘not-yet’ possible – are necessary for the hegemony of political monocultures (Amsler & Facer, 2017).
- **Areitos.** Songs, sacred living word delivered to Taínos by Cacique, and Elders.
- **Aura Surey.** Prophet that prophesized about Taino will come back together every 500 years as a remembrance of the cycle of re-birth.
- **Batey.** Sacred place where Taínos congregated to deliver Areitos, and Bomberos congregates to deliver Bombazo.
- **Batú.** Indigenous game played at the Batey. First documented in the Americas.
- **Black Indigenous people from Africa.** This is the group were kidnaped from Spaniards during the Transatlantic trade. I capitalize B for Black since this is an ethnic group that deserve respect as part of the Bomba Ceremony ancestry.
- **Blanqueamiento.** Process of whitening. Trying to become white. Approximation to white.
- **Bomba.** Tradition that emerged from the alliance between Taínos and Black Indigenous people from Africa, and still practiced today in Puerto Rico and the diaspora as a movement of resistance against white settler colonialism and Eurocentrism.
- **bomba.** Drum used in Bomba tradition.
- **Bombazo.** Includes the gathering, the dance, and the deliverance of the living word by Bomberos that follow the Bomba Ceremonial tradition.

- **Bomberos.** All the practitioners of the Bomba Ceremony as a tradition.
- **Casique or Casica.** Taíno chief.
- **Conuco.** Field dedicated to agriculture by Taínos.
- **Criollos.** *Mestizos.*
- **Cuás.** Two wooden sticks used as an instrument to mark music. This is one of the contributions of Taino to the Bomba.
- **Elders.** I use this word interchangeable for Ancestors.
- **Epistemicide.** Term coined by Santos (2014), also known as apartheid.
- **Hispanic/Latino.** Interchangeable terms referring to the land colonized Spanish crown.
- **Intersubjectivities.** Process that existing between conscious minds. In philosophy, anthropology and sociology is the relation or intersection between people’s cognitive perspectives (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010). Term used in this study to describe the relationship between the Taínos and Black Indigenous People from Africa.
- **Maracas.** In the mountains of Puerto Rico, there is a tree that gives hollows. That after drying it and filling it with beans, pebbles, can be shaken as a percussion instrument. Also, this is another instrument that is part of the contribution from Taínos.
- **Mulata.** Women mix race from Taino and Black Indigenous people.
- **Mulatage or cimarronage.** Mix race from Taino and Black Indigenous people.
- **Otherized.** Categorized as “Other”, non-white.
- **Plazoleta.** Small square where people congregate very similar to a Batey.
- **Son.** Bomba rims, based on the energy of the dancer, signer and Bomberos.
- **subjects** or *súbditos* is a person under control or dominion of another, also to render submissive or dependent an individual or nation without constituents’ rights

- ***Pueblo***. Congregation of people that is gathering in the Bomba Ceremony.
- ***Táinos***. First Nation of Puerto Rico. Belongs to the Saloid group around 500 BC (Alegria, 1984; and Rouse, 1993).
- ***terra nullus***. Empty space according to settler colonialism (Veracini, 2010).
- **transcolonialism**. A process that breakthrough beyond the multiple borders of colonial barriers of language, ethnicity, and nationhood to find a new identity beyond the ones imposed by white settler colonialism and imperialistic states, process that have been happening in the Caribbean Archipelago for over 500 years (Lionnet, 2000; Reyes-Santos, 2015).
- **TransIndigenous**. The trans – prefix in this case means that is cross racialization of Indigenous people. Instead of naming Táinos and Black Indigenous people as two different ethnic groups, I refer them as transIndigenous meaning of alliance that have been happening as the process of transcolonialism.
- **white settler colonialism**. This theory situated in the school of thought in anthropology, as a “logic of elimination.” (Wolfe, 1999)
- **yukayekes**. Taíno villages

Organization of the Study

With this background and overview now in place, I address in Chapter II: Context, which is a literature review. I develop the historical, and social political context where the *Bomba* as a ceremony developed *Bombazo* as an epistemology of emancipation. This ceremony was initiated by Táinos as Areitos in the *Batey*. When Black Indigenous from Africa and remaining Táinos joined forces, the *Bomba* ceremony was celebrated in the same space were *Bombazo* served as a course of resistance and survival. Also, I flesh out white settler colonialism logics that have been

oppressing epistemologies beyond of the boundaries of the Eurocentric academy. In Chapter III: Methodology, I describe how theoretical frameworks align with conceptual methods made it possible to find all the data dissected in this study. Chapter IV: Unpacking addresses all the findings and topics around the imposition of Eurocentrism in Puerto Rico's polity, and how the Bomba ceremony resisted white settler colonialism logics. Final, in Chapter V: Dissent, I give conclusions and discuss my future research work around the *Bomba* as a ceremony, and *Bombazo* as an epistemology of survival.

Chapter Summary

The dominant narrative in Eurocentric scholarship has ignored the systemic and structural racism that led to genocide and stolen land used to enrich European empires. These discourses have, for centuries, forced Indigenous and Black Indigenous groups to adopt colorblind ideologies. An ideology that shows that such identities are the product of a systematized whitening in which their historical legacies are part of a past where white Europeans came to civilize the New World, thus justifying their horrific actions. Despite all these measures and institutionalized efforts, it is essential to understand that white supremacy failed in implementing a New World philosophy that completely erased the ancestral knowledge that was already in place from 2,000 B.C. and continues to sustain the Indigenous people today (Rouse, 1993). After 500 years of colonization, white supremacists failed to kill the Taíno culture. We survived genocide and academic genocide. The memory of TransIndigenous traditions of the *Bomba* as a ceremony of the alliance between Taíno and the African diaspora and has sustained the ancestral consciousness in resistance to the colonizer (Tejada, 2019). Understanding that today's Boricuas' traditions are the result of the ancestral memory passed from the collective conscience of TransIndigenous foundations to the current generation of Boricuas in Puerto Rico and the

diaspora (Díaz-Quñones, 1993; Feliciano-Santos, 2021; Lloréns, 2014; Ramos-Rosado, 2011). Decolonization must go beyond any geopolitical, nation-state hegemony, economic, or socio-historical ties. Instead, it requires us to resurrect the broken memory, shake us from the amnesiac lethargy in what the violence of colonization holds Taíno people in, afraid to claim the sovereignty as the First Nation of Puerto Rico.

CHAPTER II: CONTEXTS

"Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shore, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation that tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its Indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today, we have not permitted ourselves to reject or feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it. Our children are still taught to respect the violence which reduced the red-skinned people of an earlier culture into a few fragmented groups herded into impoverished reservations."

— *Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Introduction

The available literature revealed various perspectives of epistemic awareness that I synthesized in the contexts of Indigenous people, white settler colonialism and abyssal thinking, shown in Figure 1. All these concepts are contextualized and synthesized in this section.

First, I explore the literature on Indigenous systems of knowledge in this section, where I challenge the overstory of colonialism and its aim to silence the voices of Indigenous elders and knowledge holders from transmitting knowledge to sustain the foundations of existing epistemologies (Neeganagwedgin, 2020). I briefly delve into the history of Indigenous ways of knowing by Taínos before and during the brutal process of white settler colonialism, which includes when Black Indigenous people were kidnapped from Africa and brought to the Caribbean. Both ethnic groups produced *Bomba* as a ceremony that became a ritual of the alliance—*Bombazo*, whose epistemological lyrics embody intersubjectivities as a process of transcolonialism and trans-Indigeneity bonds. I contextualize *Bombazo*'s evocation of memory as a theoretical framework to help explain Puerto Rican Indigeneity not as an event of the past, but rather as a praxis of resistance against white settler colonialism today.

Secondly, in concert with the history of Indigenous systems of knowledge in Puerto Rico, I address discourses and tensions between colonialism, settler colonialism, and colonial power

and the problems of imposing Eurocentric epistemologies in Puerto Rico. I begin by discussing the colonial context of how the adoption of Eurocentrism in the academic setting has been an instrument to reproduce whiteness to keep Puerto Rico as a perpetual colony. Then, I examine white settler colonialism, under the white supremacy logics that first emerged in anthropological research and was later adopted in the field of international relations. Then, I use it to interrogate Hispanophilia and Americanization in the academic fabric as a tool to perpetuate colonialism and oppression (Godreau, 2015; Negrón-Montilla, 1975).

Lastly, I draw from Santos's (2006) abyssal thinking, which consists of an epistemological division characterized by the impossibility of coexistence of two philosophical approaches, where modern Western abyssal thinking only prevails by exhausting other ways of thinking, such as the Indigenous ways of knowing. Since white settler colonialism's goal is to segregate and oppress nonwhite civilizations, an examination of an exclusively Eurocentric academy as a symbol of white supremacy and domination, is critical to this discussion about how Eurocentrism and its dominating narratives of a "benevolent empire" seek to silence the history of colonized people in their efforts to perpetuate colonial power (Trouillot, 1995).

History of Indigenous Systems of Knowledge in Puerto Rico

Taíno people told their story orally, but also carved it in stones at the river and in caves deep in the mountains of Puerto Rico and many sister islands in the Caribbean (Alegria, 1984; and Rouse, 1993) as a more permanent record of past events and knowledge. Rouse (1993) states that Indigenous people of the Caribbean descend from an advanced civilization called the Saladoid from around 500 BCE. Among the Taínos, there were no gender-assigned roles in politics or leadership. Knowledge holders and ancestors transmitted culture and memories as a living word in a space called *Batey* (Alegria, 1984; and Siegel, 1999). *Batey* is what Taínos

intended as a place of congregation for all families to listen, but also celebrate, judge, and play *batú*. *Batú* is the first documented game in the Americas where all genders could play (Alegria, 1984). Knowledge transmission was intended to preserve and commemorate the memory of those who were not present in body, but who remained in spirit. On other occasions, the living word was prophetic, as Feliciano-Santos (2021) documented about the prophesy of Aura Surey (p. 40).

Before the European invasion, Caribbean islanders were interconnected within the geographical area encompassed by the Caribbean Sea. Inhabitants of the zone were organized and shares a horizontal relationship with their neighbor islanders (Reyes-Santos, 2015). I am not claiming relationships were perfect, rather that there was a belief system about world among Indigenous peoples that recognized that they were not the only humans on the planet—a perception different from Europeans settlers. Taíno youth were actively involved in ways of knowing through elders and knowledge holders. At very early ages, children were instructed as religious worshippers of different deities (Gómez-Tejera & Cruz-López, 1970). The whole community worked together in different roles to produce food and maintain *yukayekes*. Fishing was another activity that was normal in everyday life. Women were an important part of these societies, showing the values of a civilized, family-oriented culture. All of this changed once the white settler colonialism became the norm in Puerto Rico since Christopher Columbus stepped onto Caribbean shores in 1493.

In 1493, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus invaded Borinquen (now Puerto Rico) and met Taínos (Flores, 1995). Bartolome de Las Casas (1552) documented Taíno culture in *Historia general de las Indias*, as a well-developed civilization with tributary and ceremonial relations, political centers, an awareness of the cosmos, and a clear ideology as part of their

worldview. It was Las Casas who reported the fate of the Indigenous peoples at the hands of Spaniards, including the genocide of Christopher Columbus against the Taínos. Because of these accounts, most believe that Taínos were completely annihilated. I argue that Las Casas, as part of a patriarchal society, did not consider that when Taíno men were decimated, it was the Taíno women who continued negotiating between Indigenous identity and forced *mestizaje*.

Taínos found it difficult to exploit the land for which they were guardians and owners. Taíno women were raped, and a growing mestizo population later became *criollos*, many of whom adopted the practices of white settler colonialism. Then, faced with a shortage of Indigenous men to exploit the land, the Spanish kidnapped Black Indigenous people from Africa. It is here where the overlooked mixed groups of *cimarrones* and *mulattos* arose, a population that began to grow through the mixed marriages of Taínos and Indigenous Blacks. As Benítez-Rojo (1985) affirms, neither the Caribbean nor the Americas are pure in race, ethnicity, or religion, and the region has undergone many transformations.

Despite evidence to the contrary, for many years it was believed that the Taínos had been exterminated. Unfortunately, many Puerto Rican scholars wanted the Taíno heritage to remain in the past (Tejada, 2019). For years, Taíno inheritance was reduced to retrospective anthropological study by social scientists (Alegria, 1997; Barreiro, 1996; and Wilson, 1997). Tensions between groups of Taíno activists and activists who believe that claiming to be Taíno denies blackness shaped the conditions under which genetic studies were conducted. The visible characteristics of the Indigenous roots of Puerto Ricans that still exist are evidence that the Taíno people were not eradicated. In 2001, Dr. Juan Martinez-Cruzado, a biologist and professor at the University of Puerto Rico, carried out a study with mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) that showed that 58% of the participants in a sample had the presence of Taíno ancestry (Fernandez-Cobo et

al., 2001; Martínez-Cruzado et al., 2001). The study gave pride and hope to many families of Taíno academic activists claiming Borinquen's space as their ancestors' space. In 2018, other studies were conducted with different DNA samples, and the results were stunning and definitive; Puerto Ricans share a direct ancestry with Taínos (Hignett, 2018; Schroeder et al., 2018).

These findings reverse the construction of race in Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands to the detriment of the colonizers. Presently, scholars have an opportunity to reconceptualize and control our history. The 500 years of colonization are only a small portion of our total history as Indigenous people. While we cherish the beauty of the alliance with the Indigenous people from the Canary Islands and those from Africa, Taínos are anxious to assert their pride in their own heritage. From here on, I discuss what revitalization, reclaiming, resistance, resilience, and reassertions over the last 400 years of Puerto Rican history have accomplished in emancipating and restoring of our ancestral heritage.

Bomba, Bomberos, and Bombazo roots

Bomba, which often has been classified as a musical genre that came from Africa to Puerto Rico (Bofil-Calero, 2014; Ramos-Rosado, 2011). But, in a recent study from Tejada (2019), *The Bomba of San Mateo De Cangrejo: The Historic Suppression of Bombero/as to Whiten Puerto Rico and Their On-Going Resistance*, *Bomba* is characterized as an alliance of the Taínos and the Black Indigenous people of Africa in mutual resistance to white settler colonialism. As a researcher reviewing the literature and ethnography on this topic, I have come to the same conclusion as Tejada (2019). It is very important not to erase the contributions of Taínos or Black Indigenous people from the process of transcolonialism and TransIndigenous intersubjectivities. Both groups worked together to make what is now the *Bomba* ceremony. As a

scholar, I cannot perpetuate colonialism, which results in the annihilation of one ethnic group by another or impose a hierarchy over groups that are equal with each other. Centuries of colonial trauma and the overstory of colonialism cannot invalidate the phenomenon of *Bomba* as the legacy of the alliance that resisted white settler colonialism.

Baralt (1985) documents how the rebellious slaves of Taíno and Black Indigenous origins started revolts seeking freedom from colonialism right after Spaniards took over Puerto Rico and its sister islands. *Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazos* served to communicate revolts, community connections and the most important role to pass through the history of resistance to future generations. Taínos and Black Indigenous people from Africa created culture and affirmed their humanity beyond the oppressive circumstances of slavery to give Puerto Ricans a future with dignity. This process is what I define as a TransIndigenous and transcolonial intersubjectivities whereby both oppressed groups created a powerful form of resistance.

Bomba ceremony lyrics are called *Bombazo*, which could be identified as songs but in reality, communicate meaning and teach future generations that what happened in the past can be connected with current situations. *Bombazos* can also be considered a conversation with elders and the pueblo, an interchange that happens organically and freely to help Puerto Ricans feel powerful and reclaim their sense of humanity and self-determination. As such, this aesthetic is an act of resistance (Ramos-Rosado, 2011). In addition, the most important contribution of *Bombazos* is their epistemological role in transmitting knowledge about Taíno and Black Indigenous roots that schools and universities ignore.

Ramos-Rosado (2011), in *Destellos de la Negritud: Investigaciones Caribeñas*, discusses the role of the *mulata* and *mulatage* that sometimes has been overlooked, since many colonized minds still seeing *Bomba* through colonial lenses. Ramos-Rosado (2011) asserts that the Taína

woman Anacaona a Casica was able to lead *areítos*, a precursor to *Bombazo*, because Taínos did not have same gender ideology as Eurocentric patriarchal societies. Casica led one of the *areitos* that formed among 300 young woman leaders of their *yukayekes* (Sued-Badillo, 1978). This way of knowing from the Taíno tradition passed into *Bomba* ceremonial practices. Women, from child to elder, have a leadership role with the same authority as other members of the *pueblo* in sharing the *Bomba* tradition. Taínos respect this more broad-based wisdom, believing it is a force that all humans share as part of the cosmos.

***Bomba* as institution, *Bombazo* as epistemological resistance**

Bomba has been a radical institution of knowledge that has nurtured Puerto Ricans on the island and the diaspora ever since Taínos and Black Indigenous people from Africa allied their efforts in opposition to colonialist oppression. Malavet (2004) argues that after 400 years under Spanish rule and 120 years as part of the U.S. empire, Puerto Rico has evolved as a distinctive, unique nation. Like Malavet, more *Bomba* scholars and academic activists assert the same findings (Abadia-Rexach, 2012; Barton, 2004; Bruno, 2022; Taylor, 2017; and Tejada, 2019) *Bomba* ceremony, the oldest tradition, has inspired other Caribbean people to follow the Puerto Rican traditions, with such musical forms of knowledge transmission as salsa and reggaeton. So, *Bomba* as institution continues evolving on the island and beyond Puerto Rico's shores.

Even though *Bomba* has been a radical institution that has inspired knowledge production in a versatile way, such as *Bomberos* and all the people that are part of the *Bomba* ceremony, the ritual is performed not as a performative act, but rather as a practice in remembrance of the ancestral wisdom passed from generation to generation. This is the reason why *Bombazo* goes outside of the boundaries of folklore or music genre. *Bombazo* is a production of knowledge from the community in support of the community. *Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazo* honor the

dance aspect of the sacred *Batey*, which Taínos conceived before colonization. Being “on the *Batey*” means that you are *free*, claiming your identity as a human being who deserves to be free. Dance movements on the *Batey* are intended to create a setting for *el reto*—a challenge between dancer and drummer (Barton, 2004). Everyone can dance, but there is a protocol, with dancers dancing in a particular order. Then, when the solo dancer salutes, the percussionist accepts that *el reto* (challenge) by playing the *Bomba* (in this context, the barrel as an instrument). Both communicate with each other by dancing with hands or skirts, thus scoring *repiques*, and *Bombero* follows with the *Bomba* barrel. The aforementioned is a ritual that demonstrates honor to the ancestors, but also can demonstrate a revolt against the oppressor. Everything happens in the context of *Batey*, a sacred place where Taínos, now under the *Bomba* tradition epistemology, have sovereignty, dignity, and resilience.

Still in discussion by some scholars is where to locate *Bomba* as an institution. The literature can guide *Bomba* scholars in this endeavor. In 1664, the Spanish crown promulgated Real Cedula, a regulation that gave free Black people escaping from non-Spanish territories the opportunity to build *bohios* (dwelling) at an *islotas* (tiny Island) called San Mateo de Cangrejos, today Puerta de Tierra. Taínos also populated the area (Steiner, 1974). Gilberto Aponte, in *San Mateo de Cangrejos, Comunidad Cimarrona de Puerto Rico: Notas para su Estudio* (1985), explains that the Spanish crown gave freedom to all Black newcomers to retain their freedom as long as they maintained a habitable area. The conditions imposed by colonial government in promoting the San Mateo de Cangrejos community made it one of the first places where *Bomba* became a radical institution. White settlers were scared about the possible organization among free Blacks, Taínos and other Black Indigenous people (Ugeto-Ponce, 2017), and for many years, Indigenous ceremonies were clandestine. However, San Mateo de Cangrejos became a

hub of emancipation, a place of contestation where, organically, a subversive community transformed Indigenous knowledge systems to *Bomba* as an institution and *Bombazo* lyrics embodied a way of epistemological resistance and survival.

In *Esclavos rebeldes*, Baralt (1985) includes many other communities across Puerto Rico where Bomba also was institutionalized. And, in all these places, what seemed like a folk dance for white settlers who never mixed with Indigenous groups was, in reality, the way for locals to organize against their oppression. The author states that it was around 1843 when Spaniards realized that all the “legal” *Bomba* gatherings were used by the Indigenous population to organize revolts against the colonial government. *Bomba* as institution became a network

“El baile de bomba constituyó uno de los métodos más utilizados para exteriorizar los sentimientos de coraje y rebeldía reprimidos y, además, la manera de planear conspiraciones. Por esa razón las autoridades insistieron en que no podían haber bailes sin permiso del gobierno...” (p. 174).

Translation (my own):

“The Bomba dance is one of the most used methods to express repressed feelings of courage and rebellion and the way to plan conspiracies. For this reason, the authorities insisted that there could be no dances without permission from the government...” (p. 174).

Bomba, as a radical and subversive movement at the center of Puerto Rican families, continued after the American invasion. González (2009) states that Taínos were the foundation of Borinquen; after this group was almost annihilated due to colonization, *Bomba* practitioners could speak for a Puerto Rican tradition that has been alive for more than 400 years. González made this statement when *blanqueamiento* was distancing Puerto Rican scholars away from Indigenous and Black roots for two reasons. The first reason relates to the Americanization of schooling. The second reason relates to the way descendants of the Spanish colonizers have a romanticized Spain’s relationship with Puerto Rico. Both visions influenced a new generation of

Puerto Ricans, where curricula have a blind spot when it comes to the horrible truth of colonization.

It is important to mention that under the Spanish rule, there was never formal schooling for Indigenous and Black people in Puerto Rico (Del Moral, 2013; Osuna, 1975). Formal schooling and higher education were for the elite—*criollos* (children of Spaniards or their descendants born in Puerto Rico) or *peninsulares* (children of Spaniards born in Spain), social categorizations for the children of Spanish citizens. All the other children were the children of disfranchised subjects of the Spanish crown. And, after the American invasion, primary and postsecondary education served to sustain and expand this new global hegemony. Puerto Rico today is still a colony. Therefore, *Bomba* and *Bombazo* continues to be a way of knowing for Puerto Ricans on the island and the mainland.

***Bombazo* and diaspora**

Bomba and *Bombazo* are no longer exclusively the ways of knowing for Puerto Ricans on the island. The movement has transcended the boundaries of the Caribbean and has been a motivation for academic activism. Scholars in the diaspora have been the ones who identify themselves as Puerto Ricans and see *Bomba* as the institution that gave them an identity to resist displacement and oppression from Americanization because *Bomba* and *Bombazo* never needed the structured schooling system from the empires for its existence. *Bomba* has been at the core of the *pueblo* acknowledging the contribution of *Bomba* knowledge holders. There have been *Bomba* movements in Chicago, Florida, and California that have been actively involved in social media and schools that allow Puerto Ricans students to show their Boricua identity (Bruno, 2022).

I must admit that as a Puerto Rican born on the island, I did not experience the love and passion of Puerto Ricans living in the United States that I have learned to express as part of the diaspora. I now love Puerto Rico as the Indigenous sacred place we cannot let die. That is why I can explain this process whereby Puerto Rico's Indigenous spirituality—essentially epistemological, ontological, and cosmological—unites us. My eyes were opened, and I believe this study is essential to open the eyes of all of us who love Puerto Rico and want to see it prosper. Following is theoretical framework as I understand it that allows us to understand the history of Indigenous knowledge systems in Puerto Rico.

***Bombazo* memory as theoretical framework**

In chapter 1, I briefly mentioned how this framework supports to position *Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazo* memory in the contested space of the Caribbean archipelago. As part of the *Bombazo* theoretical framework, I decided to use seven words that start with the letter R as descriptors, as shown in Figure 2.

1. **Restoration.** This principle shown at the center of *Bomba* as a ceremony is the overarching goal of the ritual. A beat that marks the time in the ceremony unites *Bombazos*, elders, singers, dancers, and *bomberos* in spiritual consciousness. Restoration is more than achieving decolonization; it is the center of all the activities and present decisions that are going to guide future generations who want to see liberty and freedom for Puerto Rico.
2. **Reclaiming.** Reclaiming is the act of repossessing whatever is owned by the First Nation of Borinquen. This means that collectively, as a *pueblo*, we revive the memories of lived experiences that connect with the ancestral ways of knowing.

Bombazo's epistemological knowledge gives the Indigenous people of Puerto Rico the autonomy to retake, reoccupy, and recover the land that always was ours.

3. **Resistance.** Resistance is the refusal to comply with white settler colonialism's philosophical rationales for keeping Puerto Rico a perpetual colony. Sometimes this principle will be defined by the actions of protest, defiance, and civil disobedience, where *Bombazo* epistemology will serve as a navigational artifact to move from clandestine to *guerrilla* (subversive) pedagogy.
4. **Revitalization.** This principle is foundational to the meaning of *Bomba* as institution, which has stood for more than 400 years. Understanding that white settler colonialism tries to eliminate nonwhite epistemologies, *Bombazo* epistemology acts to keep the memory of a shared past vigorous and vibrant. With revitalization, *Bombazo* can serve as a bridge to improve relationships between Puerto Ricans on the island and throughout the diaspora.
5. **Resilience.** This principle is defined by the capacity to recover from many of the setbacks purposely inflicted by imperialist hegemonies. Eurocentric academia and white settler colonialism have worked shoulder to shoulder to define the past, present, and future of Puerto Rico. But then, *Bomba* and *Bombazos* have broken through all the nuisances and challenges presented by being forced to accept a different identity from the American and Hispanic empires.
6. **Reassertions.** In all of the adversity Puerto Rico has experienced in relationship with the philosophical beliefs of the Hispanic and American empires, its people have shown that the dignity of being a Puerto Rican is not negotiable.

Reassertions have been demonstrating that Puerto Ricans are still in power regarding the definition of their identity as people.

7. **Reinventing.** The Eurocentric academy and white settler colonialism have always been anticipatory regimes trying to keep Puerto Rico’s future under their control. *Bombazo* epistemology is always at the vanguard, mobilizing people and equipping academic activists and scholars. This last principle closes the powerful energy within the circle.

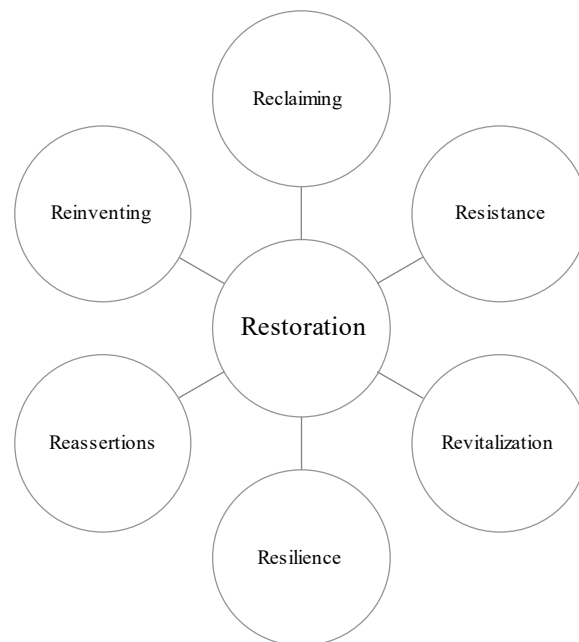


Figure 2: Bombazo epistemology as a theoretical framework

Benítez-Rojo (1985) reaffirms the Caribbean as a place beyond the limited boundaries of colonization. The social constraints imposed by the last 500 years must be redefined by the Caribbean people instead of by the dominant rhetoric of imperialist societies exploiting Indigenous people. Likewise, Neeganagwedgin (2020), a Taíno scholar from Jamaica and a professor at Western University in Canada, explains the process of framing the experiences of knowledge holders, elders, and ancestors to privilege the voices of Indigenous people in the

overstory of colonialism. In my own experience, entering the *Batey* as a sacred place for the *Bomba* ceremony permits elders and *Bomberos* to have a direct dialogue with a congregation of families, communities, and allies to bring restoration to Puerto Rican identity in the stolen lands. The existence of *Bomba* as a ceremony and the epistemic knowledge from *Bombazos* have guided academic activists as a syllabus of survival against white settler colonialism. *Bombazo's* theoretical framework helped my study to define the condition of geographical insularity as an advantage more than a deficiency, because to be categorized as an empire, a superpower must have an island in the Caribbean archipelago. So, the day that all Caribbean islands are sovereign is when all forced hegemonies will be relegated to the past.

History of White Settler Colonialism

By 1980, many scholars understood that “postcolonial” scholarship was not enough to theorize the struggles Indigenous people and other disenfranchised peoples endure because, for example, they were excluded as citizens and not allowed to enjoy the basic freedoms and rights supposedly promised by the U.S. Constitution (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2017; Neuman, 2010; Veracini, 2010). Denoon (1979) was one pioneer who analyzed the settler colonizer as different from other political, racial, and economic perpetrators of subordination. However, it was Patrick Wolfe (1999, 2006) whose seminal work defined what is known today as settler colonialism as a theory. Wolfe explored the relationship between genocide and settler colonialism and asserted what is known as the “logic” of elimination manifested as genocidal in negative dimensions. Wolfe established that the new white settler society seizes the land as the basis of the new world order. Europeans who committed both genocide and settler colonialism have typically utilized the grammar of race to perpetuate xenophobic traditions, such as antisemitism, Islamophobia, and negrophobia, in the discourse of the 18th century. But these racist practices continued under

the rejection of the acknowledgment of the First Nations after new land was discovered. Thanks to Wolfe's scholarship, the narrative of postcolonialism was reconceptualized by scholars of the epistemologies of the South.

Wolfe (1999) coined the well-known phrase about settler colonialism as “a structure not an event” (p. 2); later, Wolfe (2006) stated the logic of elimination of settler colonizer, “destroys to replace,” as the logic of elimination (p. 388). This theoretical framework has become more palpable in the last decade as a specific area of study for a scholarly inquiry. Other scholarly contributions hail from Elkins and Pedersen (2009) and Cavanagh and Veracini (2017), who have clarified the difference between colonialism, neocolonialism, postcolonialism, internal colonialism, and settler colonialism. Settler colonialism was consolidated to designate the continuing relationship of subordination between the colonizer and the colonized. Additional scholars in the areas of sociology, ethnic studies, and Indigenous studies have contributed to anthropology and international relations, the latter two pioneer fields of white settler colonialism, as an emerging theory to study. Glenn (2012), Smith, A. (2012), and Tuck and Yang (2012) make way for scholars who speak specifically to my interest in the decolonization of epistemologies to see the phenomena of our communities through their scholarly contributions.

Anticipatory regimens and superstructures as white settler colonialism

White settler colonialism is a superstructure that establishes a system that acts as an anticipatory regimen to perpetuate genocide and repression of Indigenous cultures by normalizing continued occupation and settlement, as well as land and resource exploitation, religious conversion, and supplanting of the ideologies of the colonized (Stokes, 2020; Veracini, 2010). In Puerto Rico, the following structures were essential for establishing systemic anticipatory regimes of inequities and inequalities:

- Imposing a settler state government controlled by white Creoles of Hispanic/Latino origin, and Americanization governed by the U.S. federal government.
- Implementing a colonial educational system in which American and Hispanic/Latino curriculum distanced Puerto Ricans from their Taíno and Black roots.
- Enforcing a “universal” religion (Catholicism) to justify genocide and using the Protestant church to demonize Taíno-Black culture.
- Exploitation of land and resources, with capitalism emerging as a depredatory economy that destroyed Indigenous ecosystems and replaced them with slavocracy.
- Glorifying white culture and “purity of blood,” and dehumanizing nonwhite culture.

The aforementioned systems produced intertwined systems of oppression, such as assimilation, epistemic racism/sexism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism (Grosfoguel, 2013; Negrón-Montilla, 1975; Santos, 2014; and, Wallerstein, 1974). White settler colonialism brought violence to the epistemological, ontological, axiological, and cosmological relationships that Indigenous people had/have over their lands.

White settler colonialism principles

Smith, A. (2012) spells out the conceptual framework that I adopted for my study in her work *Indigeneity, white settler colonialism, white supremacy*. Extracting from the principles that Said (1994), Smith, A. (2012), Glenn (2012), and Tuck and Yang (2012) have constructed in their respective academic work as principles, here are the problems found in Puerto Rico and the imposed American philosophical system in academia as a product of white supremacy ideologies. All these principles are interlaced with epistemologies that support Americanization as a direct product of the philosophy of white supremacy through the lenses of settler colonialism. The reason why Americanization is linked to the vast history of white supremacy is

documented in the violence, genocide, slavery, and epistemicide through the years of colonization and the expansion that has not yet ended. Evidence suggests that there has never been any initiative for reparations and emancipation to heal outraged communities.

Smith, A. (2012) examines the logic of white supremacy, not assuming that it is enacted singularly and affects explicitly one racial group. Despite the lack of attention to race and white supremacy, the author states that issues within Indigenous studies focus on sovereignty primarily over equity because of the connection to the land. Alternatively, the settler colonizer denies the existence of racial disparities by evading it and moving toward asserting their “innocence” under neutrality and color-blind notions (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

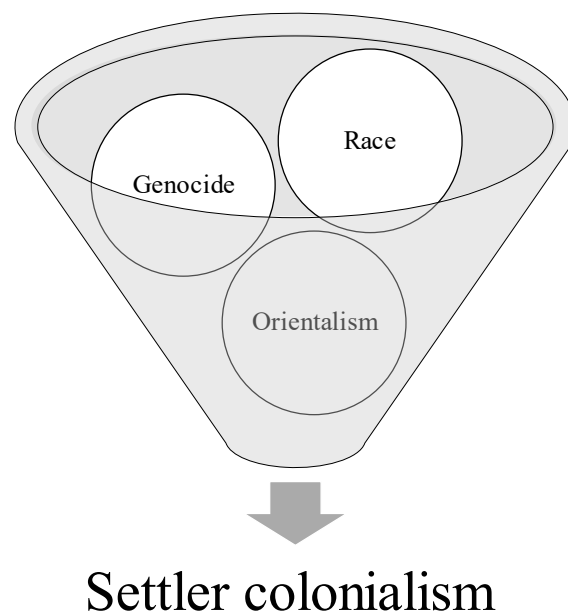


Figure 3: Settler colonialism principles

I agree that this focus can hinder the development of contexts for examining nonwhite and Indigenous ways of knowing. Smith argues there are three pillars of white supremacy (1) slaveability/anti-Black racism, which anchors capitalism; (2) genocide, which anchors colonialism; and (3) Orientalism, which anchors war. Figure 3 illustrates these principles, paired

with Glenn's (2012) contribution and Tuck and Yang's (2012) scholarly work, as a template for how white supremacists maintain a systemic structure of oppression that has limited Taínos and descendants of Black Indigenous people to self-determination and sovereignty of their Indigenous cosmology in Puerto Rico. Education is the apparatus used by white settlers to normalize and maintain Boricuas as perpetual colonial subjects.

1. **Race.** As the pillar of white supremacy, Smith, A. (2012) states that race is the logic that anchors the capitalist systems that holds people of color as commodities—using racial hierarchy to encourage anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity. This system tells people that as long as they are not Black or Indigenous, they have the opportunity to escape the commodification of capitalism. According to Smith, A. (2012) and Glenn (2012), even when Black-white binary arguments are seen as discriminatory, racial dynamics are manipulated by notions of white privilege when considering the logic of white supremacy. In other words, Black-white binary views can be complicit with whiteness. Because people of mixed ethnic and racial backgrounds who are lighter-skinned benefit from “light skin” privilege. They often are being rewarded by adhering to the racial hierarchies imposed by white settler colonizers, making these communities complicit in perpetuating colonialism. Smith, A. (2012) calls for moving beyond the Black-white binary, which obscures the centrality of the slave-holding logic in the system of white supremacy. As a result, racial tensions emerge under colorism notions, which is also racism, and it is used as a commodity to hinder decolonization and emancipation.

- 2. Genocide.** As a pillar of white supremacy, Smith, A. (2012) states that genocide is the logic that anchors colonialism as the structure with the ultimate goal of disappearing Indigenous people and culture. I include the colonized people in the U.S. territories under this notion, understanding that the land and the Indigenous people are one when the settler colonizer seized and established property rights over land and resources in various forms of direct and indirect violence. This colonization translates to subtracted knowledge, therefore cultural genocide and epistemicide. The land is a home and an integral part of the lives of the native experience with the world; experience must be counted in the epistemological, ontological, and cosmological form of the Indigenous peoples' knowledge we know as storytelling (Ani, 1994). Glenn (2012) states that U.S. settler colonialism exacted a form of ethnic cleansing, with the loss of Puerto Rico's and other countries' legal standing as sovereign nations and the imposing of treaties and legislation to speed the enforced assimilation processes of Americanization.
- 3. Orientalism.** As a pillar of white supremacy, Said (1994) and Smith, A. (2012) state that Orientalism is the logic that anchors the Eurocentric academy as a structure with the ultimate goal of defining itself as a superior civilization by positioning the East as exotic and inferior to the West, or Occident (Said, 1994; Smith, A. 2012). The logic of Orientalism as a direct product of Western academia aims to mark subordinate people or nations, which are perceived to be a threat to the well-being of the empire and that will never be part of it. In the settler colonizer's eyes, these are inferior and alien civilizations that cohabit the lands that the Western empire dominates. Glenn (2012) establishes that the settler

colonizer is perceived as more advanced; thus, other nations are already lesser beings. The superiority of Western man is central to the identity of settler colonizers, who establishes a sovereign and political government with symbols of their nationality, creating a cultural gap of superiority in the Occidental domains and inferiority throughout the Oriental domains. Similarly, Indigenous people were considered unfitted to govern *terra nullius*, thus justifying the acquisition of the land. Consequently, Orientalism allows the United States to defend the logic of slavery and genocide to stay strong enough to fight these constant wars against subordinate beings threatening its existence. Therefore, for the U.S. to keep its hegemony, it must always be at war.

Glenn (2012) and Smith, A. (2012), argue that settler colonialism as a theoretical framework lies within the experiences of racial groups and therefore should not be defined as a sort of melting pot. Instead, even when racism affects groups equally, the groups must be seen as intertwined alliances resisting racial injustice. It is important to note that “postcolonial” theorists do not recognize or acknowledge colonialism as an ongoing phenomenon. The etymology of the “postcolonial” situates colonialism as a past occurrence and, therefore, not descriptive of repression as an uninterrupted condition of enslavement. These arguments coincide with settler colonialism as a theoretical framework, studying the logic of white supremacy that produces systems of oppression in the form of the school system as the instrument to sustain the empire.

Tuck and Yang (2012) contextualize settler colonialism in the Eurocentric academic discourse to establish decolonization frameworks, not as a metaphor, but as emancipatory frameworks to improve our societies and schools. Accordingly, Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that settler colonialism is different from colonialism in that settlers come to make a new home on the

land that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new realm. This situates the settler colonizer as “persona,” a group responsible for the racial disparities in the erection of epistemological tensions that deserve to be studied for their relations with race and white supremacy.

White settler colonizers disrupted the relationship Black Indigenous people from Africa have with their land by the forced transatlantic migration to the Americas and the Indigenous people, who were dispossessed from their lands and transformed in the white settlers’ possessions. These violent events represent a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence (Ani, 1994). White settler colonialism as a postulatory framework allows us to understand the white supremacist logic in the oppression formula’s work to maintain colonization in the production of systemic racism, neoliberalism, Orientalism, and epistemicide in the education system (Said, 1994).

In addition to Smith, Glenn, and Tuck & Yang, there are other scholars, such as Mignolo and Walsh (2018), Santos (2006, 2010, 2014), Grosfoguel (2003, 2013), whose contributions may be beneficial to the study of settler colonialism as a theoretical framework because of their contribution to unveiling the inequities of colonial power on the Americas. However, they place their contribution under the fields of postcolonialism, coloniality, and decolonial studies. Although my focus is to theorize the problem of education under the lenses of settler colonialism, on occasions, I refer to their academic work, since their contributions are part of the spectrum that seeks as its ultimate objective the decolonization of education and Westernized epistemologies.

Eurocentric academia and white settler colonialism

Americanization in Eurocentric academia has been a method for the U.S. to maintain its imperial power and colonial domination among nonwhite populations (Del Moral, 2013; Navarro, 2002; Negrón-Montilla, 1975; and Spring, 2014, 2016). The problems caused by the imposition of Americanization in epistemological thoughts in higher education are not isolated incidences. Instead, they are replicated in many ethnic and racialized groups across the U.S. by mechanisms of deculturization and subtraction epistemologies (Grosfoguel, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2008; Rodríguez-Silva, 2012; Santos, 2010; Spring, 2016; Valencia, 1997).

As previously stated, Santos (2010) and Grosfoguel (2013) called this systemic oppression *epistemicide*, which is the destruction of knowledge and cultures, memories, ancestral links, and their manner of relating to others and nature. I am calling it *cultural epistemicide* because, for centuries, the epistemologies of Indigenous and African descendants have been targeted by Eurocentric settler colonizers for invisibility or erasure (Glenn, 2012; Santos, 2014; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Smith, A. 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This is the case in Puerto Rico. Many territories formerly invaded by the Spanish crown are now under U.S. colonial control, continuing Puerto Rico's subjugation by a dominating culture.

I seek to have spaces in the discourse to bring social justice to those epistemologies that were erased and replaced by Eurocentric notions that usurped Indigenous and Black Indigenous knowledge. To pursue this line of thinking, the Spanish-Hispanic empire created the ideal atmosphere to continue the processes of colonization in which territories ceded by Spain after the Spanish-American War in 1898 would continue to experience. This is important to contextualize to fully comprehend what would later occur in Puerto Rico's philosophical academic system (Del Moral, 2013; Navarro, 2002; Negrón-Montilla, 1975; and Osuna, 1975). Although the white

settler colonizers from England and United States felt superior to the Spanish settler colonizers, both empires have the same Eurocentric mentality based on the myth of white superiority. Both settler colonizers succeeded in convincing governmental and private entities to implement plans that would result in the robbery of lands and the genocide of the Indigenous people, and to continue seeking to uphold the philosophy of white supremacy by indoctrinating communities using higher education as an instrument to sustain their empires. This process exists today.

Abyssal thinking

Santos' (2006) point of departure in modern Western thinking is based on white supremacy domination that uses an epistemological division that operates through a system of visible and invisible distinctions or “the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones.” The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the reality of “the other side of the line (p. 45). As shown in Figure 3, the abyssal thinking is a line that divides the two realms. But instead of being the invisible alternative, as Santos describes, I maintain that the other side of the line is invisible but is “parallel” and analogous because the living circumstances are not optional to the survivors that are in that space—it is their reality. I fundamentally agree with the artificial distinction made by white supremacy, namely, the impossibility of having a coexistence and copresence between the two sides of the line. The tension between the two realms resides in the ideological and philosophical polity accepted as knowledge.

This is an important point to break down because there are different emancipatory discourses and different dominating discourses on each side, although the polity that controls both realms is whiteness. On one side of the realm, equality is the emancipatory discourse. On the other side, where there is nonexistence, invisibility, and nondialectical absence, the

emancipatory discourse is sovereign and capable of self-determination. Santos (2006) states that this substantive distinction shapes all modern conflicts, where you cannot apply the regulation/emancipation dichotomy to the metropolitan societies and colonial territories “because the colonial territories were unthinkable as sites for the unfolding of the paradigm of regulation/emancipation, the fact that the latter did not apply them did not compromise the paradigm’s universality” (p. 46).

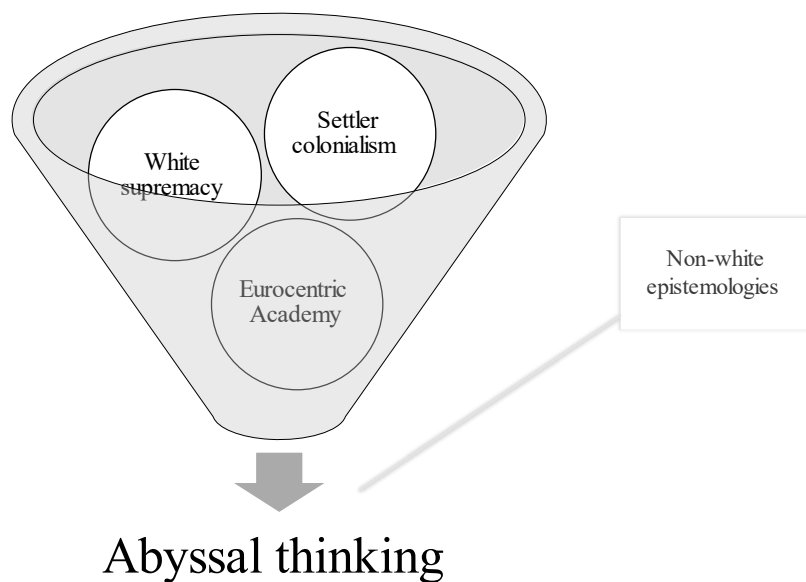


Figure 4: Abyssal thinking

Figure 4 shows the cognitive process of abyssal thinking produced by the Eurocentric academy, where all nonwhite epistemologies, including Indigenous knowledge, are outside of what is thought to be real. Indigenous sapience “encircles,” relational and indivisible, as Wilson (2008; p. 70) states, different from white dominating methods and theories. To this, I argue that Indigenous knowledge is not an alternative to Westernized knowledge; instead, is “parallel,” and the sovereign has the right to name its worldview. Whiteness employs a distinct paradigm because colonial subjects are not legal or illegal, but the lawless, soulless, noble savages,

embodiments of all forms of wildness (White, 1978). So, what whiteness has procured is whatever occurs on the visible side of the line and is not subject to the invisible side of the line.

Therefore, on the visible side of the line, a democratic state occurs where minority groups can pursue some degree of equality in the colonial zone. What exists in the invisible side of the line is the law decided upon by the strongest and most violent, where embezzlement is the norm. Then, white settlers play the role of “redeemer,” applying modern knowledge and modern law rooted in the cultural epistemicide of Indigenoussness and Blackness knowing, forming devilish manifestations of abyssal Thinking. Genocide, racism, and Orientalism are justified norms to steal lands and create a polity to reproduce a perpetual colonial zone. Following is a discussion of how abyssal thinking is defined in the colonial zone, where modern epistemology/knowledge and modern law are the two elements of Western, white supremacy logics.

Modern knowledge and modern law

“Modern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking” (Santos, 2006, p. 45). What distinguishes abyssal thinking from any other way of knowing is the impossibility of the copresence of the two sides of the line, as Figure 4 shows. The only reality of systems and structures are those created by Western philosophers and their civilizations. The base of rule and praxis is constituted by the principle of nation-states, capitalism, and law and order dichotomies. Morality and ethics in the field of knowledge in Western society dictate the universal distinction between true and false, good, and evil.

Therefore, Western philosophy and theology are the lenses controlling the realities in the colonial zone, which is the zone that is invisible and uncivil, where humans’ beings are objects that need to be colonized. In the space where these dynamics unfold and viciously police the humans that live in the colonial zone, there is a close link between the creation of forms of

capital, extraction of ways of knowing, and dehumanization. White settlers see human objects as colonial subjects that are salvable savages (*anima nullius*) as long as they surrender to the new order. This process is violent and deeply intertwined with dehumanization.

Ecologies of knowledges

Lastly, Santos aims at a post-abysal thinking world embedded in the ecologies of knowledge. I want to contextualize the ecologies of knowledge that scholars such as Santos et al. (2007) have theorized in “Opening Up the Canon of Knowledge and Recognition of Difference” in *Another Knowledge is Possible*. Santos, Nunes, and Meneses define ecologies of knowledge as:

“... proposing alternative epistemology that, far from refusing science, places the latter context of the diversity of knowledge existing in contemporary societies. Starting from the assumption that cultural diversity and epistemological diversity are reciprocally embedded, [...] is intended to show that reinvention of social emancipation is premised upon replacing the ‘monoculture of scientific knowledge’ by an ‘ecology of knowledge’ [...] The ecology of knowledge is an invitation to the promotion of non-relativistic dialogues among knowledge, granting ‘equality of opportunities’ to the different kinds of knowledge engaged in ever broader epistemological disputes aimed both at maximizing their respective contributions to build a more democratic and just society and at decolonizing knowledge and power.” (p. xx)

I agree that the definition intends to decenter Eurocentric knowledge as the only knowledge, universal, and representative of all the world. However, the current situation in which Puerto Rico is a colony requires a radical vision of ecologies of knowledge—not only an alternative theory pushing beyond postcolonialism and postcapitalism, but also a parallel cosmology that has always existed that currently operates parallel to the colonization and that will exist postcolonization. I am not only seeking equality, but further, sovereignty and self-determination, namely, who Boricuas are and what Boricuas want with their land and as a source of knowledge (Arvin et al., 2013).

Thus, ecologies of knowledge must be understood simply as the source of knowledge that every being in the cosmology has access to be sovereign. Boricuas have the right to name their world, rejecting white settler colonialism notions of who we are! Along the same lines of the main argument of Santos et al. (2007) is confronting the dominant Eurocentric paradigm and its dimensions to recognize the world's immense diverse cultures, peoples' social practices, and all forms of knowledge: "...there is no global social justice without global cognitive justice" (ix). Different worldviews become spaces of struggle when Indigenous communities are oppressed, and their sovereignty is threatened. An outcome I seek through this study is that each Boricua must pursue self-emancipatory praxis that will allow native residents in the island and diasporic community to reclaim our cosmology. Then, the ecology of knowledge will serve to reconceptualize the concepts, languages, staging dialogues, and alliances between diverse forms of knowledge and us.

Epistemic apartheid and logics of privilege

Settler colonialism under the logics of privilege employed Eurocentric, academic, hegemonic power emphasizing territorial expansion to justify modernism. These expansion-imposed political, economic, financial, and white supremacist philosophies gave the existing Indigenous civilizations only one option: assimilate into the culture of the white man or die. Race, genocide, and Orientalism as pillars of white settler colonialism under the logics of white supremacy represent an obstacle to the social justice of Indigenous and Black epistemologies in educational spaces in the Americas, which applies in minority neighborhoods and the territories of the United States, including Puerto Rico. The situation also applies to Latin American countries colonized by Spain and other Eurocentric settlers.

The foundation of epistemic apartheid is founded on Eurocentric intellectualism where the elitist society portray themselves as the only standard of knowledge and truth. Everything outside of those boundaries and paradigms is not acceptable as part of knowledge production because it is counter to the Eurocentric, monolithic structure grounded logics of privilege justified based on religion, moral standards, and the idea that white monolithic culture had a plan to rule and take over the world eliminating nonwhite epistemologies. Overall, I realized that in addition to the principles that defines white settler colonialism as a structure, logics of privilege defines white supremacists' behavior against Indigenous groups and nonwhites. The following can be synthesized in five principles by which the Eurocentric academia is used to implement structural and systemic changes.

1. The Eurocentric academy imposes a white settler colonial political structure and carries white polity sovereignty with them “while migrants can be seen as recurring against an already constituted political order” (p. 3) of white settlers, not migrants (Veracini, 2010).
2. The Eurocentric academy establishes white settlers as saviors who consider themselves as a superior race and Indigenous peoples and non-Western societies inferior and not part of the canon of thought (Grosfoguel, 2013; Santos, 2006, 2014).
3. The Eurocentric academy employs white settler colonialism's ultimate plan, which persists in the permanent elimination of Indigenous populations and imposes the culture of the settler state, with sovereignty and judicial control over their lands (Glenn, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Santos, 2006; Smith-Tuhiwai, 2010; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

4. The Eurocentric academy used legislation, such as Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 to appropriate Indigenous land, an act that also caused the usurpation of knowledge and ways of knowing, and the suppression of the rights of self-determination and sovereignty (Collins et al., 2003). Grosfoguel (2013) and Santos (2014) uncover and theorize this historical process as *epistemicide*, through which epistemic racisms and sexism were part of maintaining the European world's hegemony, a process that I classify as civilizational racism. Civilizational racism is the monolithic cultural behavior that has perpetuated the philosophy of the academic canon that is still exclusively dominated by white settler colonialism.
5. The Eurocentric academy constructs a notion of what constitutes the “real world” or the “civilized world,” and what the “universal” must be, as well as what makes or defines the Third World (Quijano, 2000; Wallerstein, 1974). The colonizer uses the educational apparatus that reproduces Eurocentric ideologies as the only and universal ideologies (Althusser, 1970). Grosfoguel (2013) states,

“In Westernized universities, the knowledge produced by other epistemologies, cosmologies, and worldviews arising from other world-regions with diverse time/space dimensions and characterized by different geopolitics of knowledge is considered ‘inferior’ in relation to the ‘superior’ knowledge produced by the few Western men of five countries that compose the canon of thought in the Humanities and Social Science” (p. 75).

Grosfoguel establishes this group of five nations as Italy, France, Germany, England, and the United States, the last being the youngest nation in this group. Spain continues to be represented under the hegemony of the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church, and Spain is not listed in this closed circle for two reasons. First, after Germany (the Dutch Empire) defeated Spain in the Thirty Years' War, Germany took its place. Second, the cosmopolitanism of white

supremacy holds that Spain was no longer the center of the world. These imperialist nations are the educational foundation of the Eurocentric philosophical canon that manifests in white supremacy. In its quest to create a new world for ideological, geopolitical, and economic needs, this dominating group used the white worldview as the universal, theoretical perspective of the positivists and rejected all non-Western knowledge.

In other words, the center of the world is based on wherever there is white monolithic society: its polity, economy, military, educational philosophy, law, and religion. Whiteness is anchored in the assumption that religion and theology provide a reason for genocide, racism, and Orientalism toward other civilizations framed as lesser to white monolithic society. It is essential to recognize that religion and theology are not synonymous with faith and spirituality. So, religion in this instance is a structure representing the church's instruction—the theology and philosophy that sustains the ideology of white monolithic society as the center of the world. Processes have given white monolithic society immunity and power under the logics of privilege and white settler colonialism. Modern thinking (abyssal thinking) starts with an intellectual reform and ends up in a state of war. Understanding that as an elitist group command the changes that will benefit the white monolithic society and white supremacists' ideologies, war therefore is a fundamental institution.

Chapter Summary

This chapter unfolds a threefold claim that has to do with history and power. The available research and literature brought various understandings that I was able to contextualize in a theoretical way. Under the conceptualization of *Bomba* as a ceremony and *Bombazo* as epistemology, the paradigm addresses history and power. I show how Puerto Ricans have been able to resist settler colonialism framed under the context of the Caribbean archipelago beyond

the American and Latin-America narratives fostering emancipatory experiences based on transcolonialism and Indigenous intersubjectivities. In the second context, I synthesize the cultural archeology of white settler colonialism that has been obstructing the development of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans under a structural systemic of oppressive social, political, economic, philosophical, and religious conditions. Lastly, as the third context, abyssal thinking explains Puerto Rico's *Bomba* traditions as in constant friction with the logic of white settler colonialism standards that use the Eurocentric academy to disrupt Indigenous ways of knowing constructions and worldview.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

“The deeper that I submerge myself into tribal knowledge systems, the more I resist Western ways of knowing as given for all academic research, even though I know that this demands a long swim against a strong current. I can appreciate Western research methods of coding, bundling, categorizing, and naming according to a set of values and principles to make meaning. My concern is not about organizing knowledge, [...], but rather it is the worldview, the epistemological underpinning of this organization with which I grapple.” – M. Kovach (2009) *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*

This is not a traditional dissertation. My quest is for a radical reconceptualization where Indigenous ways of knowing, and worldview are positioned alongside those of the Eurocentric academy and other philosophical understandings. My study recognizes that Puerto Ricans can together imagine our island outside of the boundaries of white settler colonialism and gain control of our narrative as a sovereign nation. My study uses transdisciplinary methods to honor the wisdom of the knowledge holders and ancestors of the *Bomba* as a ceremony and *Bombazo* as its epistemic source of wisdom. To understand the complexity of Puerto Rico in the context of it being the oldest colony in the world, I privileged transdisciplinary processes over academic rigor and the use of interdisciplinary sources. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and discourse analysis (DA) approaches were applied to understand Puerto Rico’s reality better as a place still contesting dominated by Eurocentric academia.

As I contested positions regarding the Westernization of knowledge, Eurocentric academia, and my position as a researcher, later spelled out in this section, I am not a traditional postmodernist, though my study contributes to that line of thinking. Rather, I identify myself as an Indigenous-perspective scholar, even when the theories I apply here will be understandable to traditional scholars. I draw from the wisdom of activists, academic sisters, and brothers, perceived as clandestine or guerrilla pedagogists because their work is outside of the boundaries of Eurocentric academia.

The U.S. federal government and Puerto Rico's local government have not recognized individuals with Taíno Indigenous ancestry, but the United Nations has (Batista-Kunhardt, 2022; Global Press Journal, 2020; and Robinson, 2022). Academic activists, scholars, and transdisciplinary researchers have challenged institutional problems based on epistemological and ontological concerns related to indigeneity, and those challenges motivated my decision to explore this area in my research. With the understanding that "Indigenous peoples have not only racial but political identities" and "the concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens" (Brayboy, 2005; and National Education Policy Center, 2020), I introduce the methodology I applied in this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that I have applied to my dissertation as a methodological approach fits very well with my conceptual theoretical analysis. Wodak and Meyer (2009) state that events, structures, reactions, and their applications are flexible to research application. CDA is key to my study because the "critical" application of the analysis explicitly reveals my research position, but even more, unapologetically so as I reveal the relevant power dynamics and structures based on power ideologies.

CDA emerged in the 1970s, when postmodernist scholars began to challenge dominant narratives and discourses. CDA's theoretical foundations and critical linguistics used hermeneutical processes, but it is more accurate as a methodology in understanding power dynamics as a social phenomenon. In this conceptual study, linguistics are not only in one language, but also in different settings, including government, media, social media, and political realms. I will use CDA to depict the reality of the worldview of Indigenous peoples.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research often is defined as an approach for “exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). Also, qualitative research uses methods different from empirical studies, relying on diverse and unique steps of data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2013) state that qualitative methods “use(s) words as data... collected and analyzed in all sorts of ways” (pp. 2-4). I have placed the Indigenous ways of knowledge paradigm at the center of this study, where the theories I have applied are “a set of beliefs that guide action” and are related to the worldview of Caribbean people in the Antillean Archipelago (Guba, 1970, p. 17).

In other words, this is a theoretical dissertation that instead of focusing on validation, focuses on an iterative process based on a discipline imagination about the Indigenous people of Puerto Rico. I have applied three different frames—building, synthesis, and describing theories—contextualized and combined under an intersectional conceptual framework. According to Gilson and Goldberg (2015), Van de Ven (1989), Weick (1989) and Whetten (1989), theory construction as disciplined imagination can be used to address and resolve tensions, inconsistencies, and contradictions surrounding a phenomenon.

Conceptual Dissertation

When I was developing the methodology for my dissertation, I decided on a conceptual framework for two reasons. First, during my early course work, I did not find myself in any of the critical theory literature we studied. At the same time, Caribbean people and Puerto Ricans were overrepresented in deficit theory as lazy people who do not know how to govern themselves and only come to the mainland United States to take public aid and compete with other Latinos and migrant groups for social support. I found such rhetoric antagonist and wrong:

I was a *pato feo* (ugly duck) not represented in any of the dominant critical discourses of Latino studies or even perceived as American. I did not know how to bridge the gap between the scholarship of Caribbean academic activists and other Indigenous people and discourses outside of the academy important to me but not for the rest of my group study. In my understanding, the severity of the problem entailed was not only silencing my people, but also in representing them in the first place. The best-selling *The 1619 Project* (Hannah-Jones, et al., 2021) totally omitted the story of Black and Indigenous people in the Caribbean. In the rebuttals to the aforementioned conceptual work, “The 1776 Report” and *España la primera globalización*, (López-Linares, 2021; The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission, 2021), the Caribbean was erased as well. Intended or not, being wiped from history gave me a horrendous feeling that called for an epistemic and cognitive justice (Santos, 2014). I submitted my dissertation proposal and got the *aval* of my committee and methodologist, who understood that my proposal was new, extending beyond the narrative that only depicts the Caribbean people as having been exterminated during Columbus’ time.

The second reason I decided to do this dissertation as a conceptual work is because of the prediction that the Eurocentric academy has used as an anticipatory regime to control epistemologies outside of the boundaries of Westernized methodologies to justify the prevalence of abyssal thinking. Postmodernists such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault opened rich discussions vital to the modern philosophy of thought, but that does not mean that their taxonomy of language represents the worldview and intellectual assumptions of Indigenous peoples. My conceptual work goes beyond of the school of thoughts of hermeneutics and rhetoric. Critical discourse analysis serves better for the purpose of this study since, more than a methodology, it is an appropriate approach for seeing my worldview through the Indigenous

lens. As a Puerto Rican, I do not need that white settler colonialism, Eurocentric academic theories, and other lenses to define my people's worldview, particularly since Caribbean people have been overrepresented in anthropology, sociology, and many other disciplines that view us using deficit theories. I think it is time that the voices of Caribbean scholars and academics activists are considered in the narratives about decolonization, both critical and emancipatory, because there are a variety of scholarship work that requires cognitive justice.

Definition

A conceptual study is one that is nonempirical. Instead, it is grounded in analysis that tries to bridge “existing theories in interesting ways, link work across disciplines, provide multi-level insights, and broaden the scope of [our] thinking” (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015, p. 128). Conceptual research integrates and proposes relationships among critical constructs that requires an understanding of trade-off between (specific for my study) dominant frameworks vs. emancipatory ones (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015).

Cropanzano (2009) adds that a conceptual work is important because it “underscore[s] commonalities that build coherence” in resolving existing tensions in the phenomena; none of this happens in other studies. This type of study is different from other important, nonempirical forms of research, such as meta-analysis and literature review, because the purpose of a conceptual work is to address a research problem using theoretical building concepts.

Research design

Jaakkola (2020) states that in the case of a conceptual study, research design is a plan for collecting data (theories selected) and analyzing evidence (literature and documents to cross-examine) that helps to answer the questions posed by the qualitative researcher. I applied the conceptual model template for my study as follows:

1. **The researcher seeks to build a theoretical framework that predicts the relationship between concept and causal linkages** (Delbridge & Fiss, 2013). The framework allows the researcher to describe an entity and identify issues that should be considered in the study. As a researcher examining the literature, I realized the Eurocentric academy has been used as an apparatus of the imperialist nation to create an anticipatory regime of control.
2. **The researcher identifies previously unexplored connections between constructs, introduces new constructs, and explains why elements of a process lead to a particular outcome** (Cornelissen, 2016; Fulmer, 2012). As a researcher, I selected particular conceptual frameworks and theories based on the rationale that I gave earlier for why I have selected a conceptual research approach. First, I found narratives from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean were an interpretation of, but not exactly representative of, the phenomenon. Second, the Eurocentric academy has used theoretical frameworks as an anticipatory regime to decide what is best for Puerto Rico (since Puerto Rico is colony of the United States) instead of Puerto Ricans deciding what is best for them.
3. **The researcher contributes to extant knowledge by delineating an entity: its goal is “to detail, chart, describe, or depict an entity and its relationship to other entities”** (MacInnis, 2011). As a researcher, I was able to identify the institutions, entities, and their relationships with the phenomena to Puerto Rico’s higher education system.

Data collection

According to Jaakkola (2020), the collection of data is not exactly what researchers apply in traditional qualitative studies. For the conceptual study template that I decided to apply, data are the theories that fit with the research design. I selected two theoretical frameworks for my

study—white settler colonialism and abyssal thinking as viewed through the work of Santos (2006). Also, I delineated *Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazo* as entities that have resisted dominant discourses. My ultimate goal is to create new knowledge by building and combining carefully selected sources of information according to a set of norms (Jaakkola, 2020, p. 19).

I chose to cross-examine the conceptual frameworks with “The 1776 Report” and *España la primera globalización*, data that as conceptual in nature, helped me “bridge existing theories in interesting ways, link works across disciplines, provide multi-levels insights, and broaden the scope of [our] thinking” to reflect a deep analysis and synthesis of theories (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015, p. 128).

As stated in Chapter 1, the following research questions have acted as a navigation system for this study and future research.

Research Questions

1. How have the logics of Eurocentric academia, along with white settler colonial ideology (philosophy) and polity, functioned to frame didactic philosophy in Puerto Rico?
2. How have the competing white settler colonial legacies of Hispanic/Latinization and Americanization shaped academic theory in Puerto Rico?
3. What discourses have been used to erase and make invisible Taíno and African epistemological legacies in Puerto Rico identity and education?
4. How can the alliance of Afro-Taíno epistemologies emancipate current educational philosophy in Puerto Rico?

Positionality

Before deciding to pursue this PhD, I was aware that I had learned at schools and universities to internalize social oppression and subordination as an intrinsic way of existing that

perpetuates systems of colonialism. As a product of the colonial educational system in Puerto Rico, I gained knowledge that was not designed to promote emancipatory change or cultivate my intellect. I was perpetually conditioned to maintain the structures that uphold inequality, making liberation seem unattainable. Only later did I come to understand that education, from pre-kindergarten to higher education, was used as a tool to condition me and others in this way. Unfortunately, I learned that I should not fight to preserve my culture and achieve social emancipation because of rampant Americanization and misguided patriotism—a "celebration" of patriotism based on an internalized oppression that pervades Puerto Rican culture today.

In this study, my criticism addresses the American colonizer who continues to hinder the development of Puerto Rico through American indoctrination in areas as small as neighborhoods and as large as the entire United States, as well as the higher educational system of Puerto Rico, which consciously or unconsciously, romanticizes the Spanish colonizer as the founder of modernization in the Americas (Duany, 2002; Godreau, 2015), a fact about which I feel outraged. Although Puerto Rico has never obtained the political status of a nation-state, it is considered a nation, a by-product of two colonial empires, which is part of the reproduction of the white settler colonialism worldview. The descendants of the white Europeans who fought against the Spanish crown to obtain independence in the North and South American continents have ostracized the Indigenous people and those of African descent, categorizing them as uncivilized communities that do not contribute to culture.

These intertwined oppressions led me to seek this doctorate to further examine the discourses that perpetuate colonization and ignore our Taíno and African roots in favor of white settler colonialism. However, like any scholar who may face impostor syndrome, I decided to become a scholar, still detoxing from the colonial mindset of oppression, who can learn to think

critically about my own belief. During this process, I experienced a moment of awakening when reading Collins (2000) on the Black feminist thought paradigm:

“The shadow obscuring this complex Black woman’s intellectual tradition is neither accidental nor benign. Suppressing the knowledge produced by any oppressed group makes it easier for dominant groups to rule because the seeming absence of dissent suggests that subordinate groups willingly collaborate in their own victimization. Maintaining the invisibility of Black women and our ideas not only in the United States, but in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Europe, and other places where Black women now live, has been critical in maintaining social inequalities. Black women engaged in reclaiming and constructing Black women’s knowledges often point to the politics of suppression that affect their projects” (p. 3).

This awakening unfolded through the combined practice of self-learning, internalizing this learning, deconstructing false paradigms, constructing a new way of thinking, and embracing my Indigenous identity—an identity that I discovered through the study of Black feminist thought and white settler colonialism. I remember when I presented my autoethnography, *A Taina Memoir*, in a box to my mentor “mother” in academia, I was challenged to stand within myself and try something new for me. I accepted the challenge of rewriting my story through the lens of critical race theory. The colonial subject in me was breaking chains of subordination, and my struggle engendered the sensation of emptiness and orphanhood. I had more questions than answers. After revealing this new reality to myself and my academic “mother,” I asked myself, What will I do? How do I feed and nourish my new identity? How do I continue to develop this new knowledge? From this line of questioning, I understood that the only way to liberate colonized minds is by unlearning principles that keep us under oppression. I called out my oppressors and identified their origins to free myself.

As defined in the matrix of domination (intertwined using Freire, 1968) a process of internalization of the oppressor must be countered using the following ideas: (1) every epistemological and ontological vocation makes you more human, where the struggle is defined

in terms of one's attempt to overcome one's oppression; (2) through the process of conscientization, Black and Indigenous people can understand their power; and (3) I can change my circumstances by becoming an agent of knowledge (Collins, 2000; Freire, 1968). Theorizing this conceptual work analysis, I realized both higher educational systems represented in the Eurocentric academy by white settler colonizers, Spain, and the United States are the oppressors—oppressors who disrupted the inhabitants of the Turtle Island, the Caribbean, and Africa who need to be stopped! Unfortunately, today's higher education is reinforcing intertwined systems of oppression, such as assimilation, epistemic racism/sexism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism (Grosfoguel, 2013; Negrón-Montilla, 1979; Santos, 2010 and 2016; Wallerstein, 1974). Although in political scope, Spain has no jurisdiction in Puerto Rico, civilizational racism is still transmitted through the so-called Hispanidad, maintaining a form of oppressive reality that is modeled as internal colonization. By examining vis-à-vis the logic of both colonizers, I was able to describe those generational oppressions that are ignored as the root of the problem regarding the advancement of Puerto Rican society.

I revealed *Bomba* ceremony as a form of rebellion against slave-owners of Hispanidad and Americanization, as an effort of survival from these structures of systemic oppression. *Bombazo* emancipatory epistemologies that have produced pedagogies that have resisted the imposition of the Eurocentric educational canon of colonialism, colonial power, and white settler colonialism give nonwhite scholars, educators, and ancestors only one option—to stand clandestinely and resist subversively in the frontline as scholars (Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid, 2011; Delgado et al., 2023; Del Moral, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2013; Grosfoguel et al., 2018; Negrón-Montaner, 2009, *guerrilleros* delivering guerrilla pedagogy, always ready to fight.

Chapter Summary

Doing this research, I realized that the basis of any individual or collective cognitive effort in the arts, policymaking, legislation, narratives, and other discourses is to try to convey the meaning of what is translated in ways of knowing and, even more, the worldview of a society, nation, and ethnicity. Those meanings can be made through semiotics, images, documents, and text in each context or interconnected contexts based on the influence of intersectional beliefs and expectations. Those beliefs and expectations, which are epistemological, ontological, and axiological in nature, frame our individual and collective understanding of sexuality, gender, spirituality, and idiosyncrasy. The academy has been calling this knowledge, but knowledge intrinsically is deeper than humanity's conceptualization of interactions with nature and reality. In other words, those dynamics of contextualization that are happening in different contexts are what the way of knowing (not knowledge) is based on elements of ethics and aesthetics that give meaning to a society and what its constituents have produced as symbols that determine the elements of ethics and aesthetics. That is the fabric of what Eurocentric academia is today.

CHAPTER IV: UNPACKING

Applying to globality, philosophy does not play its role as an actor during a recital; it interacts with other philosophies and with other facts, and it cannot know the results of the interaction between itself and other world visions. World visions can conceive of everything, except alternative world visions, if not to criticize them and to show their inconsistency. Affected by constitutive solipsism, philosophies can say everything about the world they design and very little about the world they help to construct. – U. Eco (1984) *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*

Introduction

Unpacking in this study means to address explored and unexplored concepts based on the theoretical frameworks designed in the context of abyssal thinking and a *Bombazo* epistemological frame, as emancipatory scholars have been doing to reconceptualize dominant, Westernized, and Eurocentric narratives. As a conceptual dissertation, this academic work explores and explains a particular concept about the Puerto Rican experience. As an emancipatory scholar who looks for Puerto Rico to escape the trap of colonialism and emerge as a self-determining nation-state, I hope to cause a paradigm shift. I aim to provide a thorough analysis and a definition of the research problem using theory and critical thinking, specifically critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is an approach suited to critical research, and it has been useful in support my cross-examination of theories about how white settler colonialism logics are used in various social contexts to maintain or challenge imperial/colonial power relations between Puerto Rico, the legacy of Spanish settlement, and territorial occupation by the United States.

Research problem

Since 1493, Puerto Ricans have remained under epistemic, ontological, and axiological violence, a legacy of imperial Spanish rule and the continued oppression wrought by Americanization. There are existing reports documenting brutality by local and federal governments against student activists protesting current and new neoliberal policies of the

Eurocentric polity driven by white radical ideology (Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid, 2011). Moreover, the Eurocentric academy, or the emphasis on European and American intellectual traditions to the detriment of other cultures and perspectives, has also been a concern in Puerto Rico's higher education system. This approach to education can perpetuate a view of the world that is centered on Western perspectives and values, while marginalizing the experiences and perspectives of other cultures and communities.

In recent years, there have been efforts to promote a more inclusive and diverse approach to higher education in Puerto Rico, which includes the recognition and incorporation of African, Caribbean, and Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives. This approach has aimed to move beyond the limitations of the Eurocentric academy to promote a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the world and its complex histories and cultures, but it has failed (Valentin, 2022).

Grosfoguel, et al. (2016) argued that the philosophy that exists today in America is the product of a "Westernized" and "patriarchal" philosophy. Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory since 1898 and served by America's higher education system, exists and functions within the limits of the history of white epistemological thought. If the academic institutions that students are attending do not provide the spaces for emancipation, *what is the purpose of their existence?* The Westernized polity that has put in place structures and systems has institutionalized and normalized oppressive, violent pedagogy centered in *blanqueamiento* and *epistemicide* (Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid, 2011; Godreau, 2015; Ramos-Rosado, 2011; and Tejada, 2019).

Research Inquiries

I posed the following questions to structure this study:

1. How have the logics of Eurocentric academia, along with white settler colonial ideology (philosophy) and polity, functioned to frame didactic philosophy in Puerto Rico?
2. How have the competing white settler colonial legacies of Hispanic/Latinization and Americanization shaped academic theory in Puerto Rico?
3. What discourses have been used to erase and make invisible Taíno and African epistemological legacies in Puerto Rican identity and education?
4. How can the alliance of Afro-Taíno epistemologies emancipate current educational philosophy in Puerto Rico?

Because colonization did not end it with independence from Spanish rule and the emergence of a new American nation as a “settler state” on stolen lands (Veracini, 2010). These research questions address key issues related to the framing of didactic philosophy in Puerto Rico.

The first research question focuses on the role of Eurocentric academia and white settler colonial ideology in shaping didactic philosophy in Puerto Rico. This question seeks to understand the ways in which these forces have influenced the development of educational theory and practice in Puerto Rico.

The second research question examines the competing legacies of Hispanic/Latinization and Americanization in shaping academic theory in Puerto Rico. This question seeks to understand how these competing forces have influenced the development of educational theory and practice in Puerto Rico, and how they have shaped the educational landscape in the region.

The third research question addresses the issue of erasure and invisibility of Taíno and African epistemological legacies in Puerto Rico’s identity and education. This question seeks to understand the discourses and narratives that have been used to erase and marginalize these

important cultural legacies, and to identify the ways in which these legacies can be better recognized and preserved.

The fourth research question focuses on the alliance of Afro-Taíno epistemologies to emancipate the current educational philosophy in Puerto Rico. This question seeks to understand the ways in which these epistemologies can be brought together to create a more inclusive and equitable educational system that recognizes and values the contributions and perspectives of Taíno and African communities.

In short, these research questions provide a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to understanding the challenges facing higher education in Puerto Rico, and the ways in which these challenges can be addressed through the recognition and preservation of Taíno and Black Indigenous epistemological legacies. To answer the questions and contextualize the overarching focus of this study, I have outlined a conceptual framework that bridges existing theories in ways that can detangle the complexity of the issue. The next section provides multilevel insights and theoretical links to broaden the unexplored scopes of thoughts.

Intersectional conceptual framework

Dei (2012) confronts scholars as “intellectual imposters” who mimic dominant knowledge theories in the Western academy. Although the decolonial discourse and praxis do not refer to a single theoretical school, it is essential to contest whiteness and Eurocentrism in academia to emancipate ancestral knowledge as not an alternative knowledge, but as ancient autochthonous knowledge that has been misrepresented and misunderstood. Autochthonous knowledge is the knowledge that emerged from Indigenous peoples’ relationship with their land. Part of this knowledge is that when Columbus invaded what is today the Americas, the lands were not “virgin wilderness but a network of Indigenous nations, peoples of the corn The link

between peoples of the North and the South can be seen in the diffusion of corn from Mesoamerica” (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, p. 30). In other words, precolonial Indigenous civilizations in Turtle Island (the Americas today) were based on advanced social-cultural systems of knowledge and polities.

Contrary to the epistemological privilege granted to Westernized academic rhetoric, the reality is that Indigenous peoples had occupied and shaped every part of the Americas for centuries before Western explorers “discovered” them. To survive the violence of white settlement and forced migration of the Indigenous people coming from Africa, Taíno society created TransIndigenous alliances that produced epistemological systems that have sustained what is today the Puerto Rican autochthonous knowledge (Mays, 2021).

Consequently, my study is a contestation of Puerto Rico’s education system and a call for decolonizing theories because resistance, however preliminary, is the first step. I invoke the legendary protection that guided me to uncover what was hidden, but never dead. We, the Taínos, are alive! As a Taíno-Afro-descendant scholar, I come with the authority given to me by my ancestors and my land to speak truth to power. I do not hesitate because this study can make an essential contribution to challenging much of the knowledge that has consciously or unconsciously shaped the identities of people of color, using theories produced by the logics of the white philosophical canon.

In response to the ways whiteness has infiltrated my people and our land, I dismantle colonized scholars’ historiographies, thesis, and dissertations that eliminated the Taíno race and culture and produced the Puerto Rican identity resulting from Latinization and Americanization that distanced us from our Taíno and African roots (Abbad Y Lasierra & Acosta, 1885; Brau, 1894). It is not possible to decolonize colonized epistemologies and bring emancipation if the

methodologies, theories, and processes of theorizing are consistent with the thinking of white settler colonialism. Rather, the Taíno and African ancestors' knowledge must be the intellectual force through which the Borinquen identity of the Puerto Rican people will re-emerge.

As a result, my scholarly praxis argues against white monolithic methodologies and analysis methods (intra- and transdisciplinary methods) and assert the need to theorize the phenomenon in the realm of two analogous intellectual spaces: the academy and Indigenous knowledge. Eurocentric universities are institutions of higher education that prioritize European ways of knowing and teaching, often at the expense of other cultures and perspectives. Eurocentrism has historically dominated Western academia, perpetuating the notion that knowledge produced in the West is objective and universal, while other ways of knowing are deemed subjective and inferior. This has resulted in the exclusion of non-Western perspectives, cultures, and knowledge from the academic canon.

The imposition of Eurocentric epistemologies on the educational system of Puerto Rico has perpetuated the systemic, violent inequalities that maintain it as a colony. In Puerto Rico there is only one pedagogical method, and it is inequity. Figure 1 illustrates my understanding of how the chosen theories operate in the current context of the phenomenon studied. Crenshaw's (1989) discussion of intersectional feminism broke new ground by reconceptualizing theoretical assumptions that were invisible (left out) to form new knowledge. In this conceptual study, the context of "intersectionality" is crucial to dissect how Eurocentric academy and modern knowledge and law have purposely used elimination and disposition to maintain hegemonic power over the ways of knowing. This paradigm shift allowed scholars to explore strategically unexplored areas of knowledge. Grande (2018) work *Refusing the University* theorized that the academy is "an arm of the settler state" (p. 47), a place that, under the guise of being an innocent

and amiable place, is where logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted. Therefore, this intersectional conceptual framework allows me to put in context the concepts of nonwhite epistemologies, abyssal thinking, and post-abyssal thinking.

***Bombazo* epistemology, and epistemic apartheid**

Bombazo epistemology as a theoretical framework is for purposes of this conceptual study categorized as nonwhite epistemology existing beyond the boundaries of the Eurocentric academy. White supremacists have labeled emancipatory theorists leftist or socialist., and as a school of thought, emancipation theory could be perceived as poststructuralist. However, the importance of this epistemology lies in the distinction between the Eurocentric academy and those philosophies that criticize the academy. Unfortunately, theorists in this space exist in epistemic apartheid; W.E.B Dubois, Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and many other scholars who have fought against dominant academic systems. This group is where I have situated *Bombazo* epistemology, not only because of its racial context, but also from the political standpoint of bringing change to Puerto Rico. *Bombazo* has been forced to operate clandestinely and today is perceived as a guerrilla resistance against the Eurocentric polity.

Abyssal thinking

In the context of abyssal thinking, Santos' (2006) modern thinking divides the world into what can be thought of, understood, and/or imagined and everything else—a division that operates as an anticipatory knowledge regime keeping white elites at the top of the hierarchy and partitioning off all nonwhites epistemic and knowledges. Santos calls this apartheid process epistemicide, where the white settler who controls epistemological knowledge decides what is legal and what is illegal, who lives and who dies. Thus, Eurocentrism can be said to have been based on the logic of white supremacy, where the colonial subject is devoid of value because

they have been dehumanized; this form of oppression only adds value to white privilege. These structural, systemic, racist policies have historically oppressed minorities and exist to perpetuate the violence that seems invisible or implicit but that has been explicitly imposed to manipulate and control epistemologies and pedagogies so that white supremacy can proliferate.

I assert that the Eurocentric academy denies there is an existential problem and behaves as though whiteness is in crisis. Unfortunately, this state of mind makes white supremacists act from a place of ignorance and fear. It is therefore necessary to uncover and dismantle the ethics and aesthetics whereby Eurocentrism has labeled its philosophy as modern, sympathetic, nonviolent, colorblind, and as representing universal well-being and the only truth. The logics of privilege sanction the authoritative use of violence, genocide, economic destabilization, and other measures to secure the future hegemony of whiteness. Scholars from the schools of thought of critical race theory (CRT) postcolonialism, postmodernism, and Indigenous perspectives studies have and continue to push against this state of affairs.

Ecologies of knowledge

Ecologies of knowledge target a place of understanding that does not exist yet. I do not claim that ecologies of knowledge are a solution, policy, new polity, set of rules, or the imagination of a new world order; however, it should be the genesis of another era for humans to get rid of structural systems of oppression where a white monolithic polity and Eurocentric academy are part of the past without an anticipatory regime. Even when is positioned to the right of the abyssal thinking that represents modern knowledge and the law/Eurocentric academy, conceptually that is a place that does not have a geographical position; it is the overarching goal that will reverence epistemological thoughts no matter its positionality in the cosmology of knowledge. At the left are leftist epistemic positions, which could represent, critical race theory

(CRT); postcolonialism, postmodernist, and emancipatory theoretical views; and Indigenous perspectives studies I have named nonwhites epistemologies. Once the Eurocentric academia become a different cognitive space that practices cognitive justice, the boundaries of epistemic apartheid and abyssal thinking must disappear in favor of ecologies of knowledge. Following are four themes that emerged in cross-examining the data.

Theme 1: Eurocentric ideology and Puerto Rico's higher education

The Eurocentric academy, or the emphasis on European and American intellectual traditions, has often ignored or marginalized the contributions and experiences of non-Western cultures and communities. This approach to education can perpetuate a view of the world that is centered on Western perspectives and values, while neglecting or dismissing the experiences and perspectives of other cultures and communities. In 2011, Rima Brusi-Gil de Lamadrid published *University of Puerto Rico: A Testing Ground for the Neoliberal State*, which intended to reveal and unpack how the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) has a long and complex history that reflects the broader political, economic, and social struggles faced by the island of Puerto Rico. In recent decades, the UPR has faced challenges related to the implementation of neoliberal policies, which have had a profound impact on the university and its role in society. As described Brusi-Gil de Lamadrid (2011) in the NACLA *Report on the Americas*, the white settler neoliberal state has used the University of Puerto Rico as a testing ground for policies that prioritize market-oriented solutions, reduce the role of the state in providing public goods, and increase the influence of private actors in shaping the direction of education and research as products of Eurocentric academia. These policies have resulted in cuts to funding, increased tuition, and a shift toward a more market-driven model of education that prioritizes profits over

the needs of students and communities. The result is an imposed curricula of what the United States wants to emphasize about Puerto Rico, not what Puerto Rico needs to progress.

Furthermore, in *Dissent Magazine*, Negrón-Montaner (2018) published “Our Fellows Americans,” explaining why calling Puerto Ricans “American” will not save Puerto Rico from its current colonial oppression. Negrón-Montaner’s argument makes the case that calling Blacks, Indigenous people, and Puerto Ricans in the territory “Americans” or emphasizing their U.S. citizenship does not necessarily equate to them having equal rights and freedoms as citizens. Despite being U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans do not have full representation in the U.S. government and do not have the same political rights as citizens of the mainland. As a result, they are unable to vote in presidential elections and do not have voting representation in Congress.

Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid (2011) and Negrón-Montaner (2018) argue that this lack of political representation perpetuates the colonial status of Puerto Rico, and that true decolonization can only be achieved through addressing these political inequalities. Simply calling Puerto Ricans “Americans” does not address the underlying issues of colonial oppression and does not ensure that they will be treated equally under the law. If “American” means inclusion for the dominant society, it implies the opposite—exclusion—for nonwhites. Additionally, the commitment to promote inclusive education in Puerto Rico has been hampered by the prevalence of abyssal thinking and a Eurocentric academia that has resulted in a limited understanding of the cultural and historical experiences of Puerto Ricans and a lack of recognition of the unique challenges faced by communities of color and those from low-income backgrounds. Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid (2011) showed how students are becoming agents of change by challenging Eurocentric and neoliberal policies imposed by the Board of Trustees, Puerto Rico’s gubernatorial leadership, and the federal government. Students who have made the

grounds of the University of Puerto Rico a field of contestation have faced significant challenges in recent years, but it remains a vital institution for the people of Puerto Rico and a symbol of the struggle for social justice and educational equality.

Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid (2011) and Negrón-Montaner (2018) state there are other groups that are in favor of whiteness, such as a political students' associations affiliated with the Republican Party, especially with 45th U.S. president's extremist policies. Negrón-Montilla's (1975) seminal work about how Americanization has hindered other epistemologies in the curricula of the inner-city schools in United States; in Puerto Rico, a few days after 1898 invasion by the United States, the American flag was raised to show authority over the locals. This brought sociopolitical instability to the Caribbean Antilles, especially the territory of Puerto Rico. Through all the United States economic growth since then, the Caribbean has never recovered! The United States presence in the Caribbean has only one purpose—to strengthen local agricultural economies by destroying all other economic activities that once thrived there (Scarano, 2023).

Theme 2: Barriers to a sovereign epistemic social justice stance

The imposed structural systems of oppression gave the existing Indigenous civilizations only two options: to assimilate into the culture of the white man or die. Two strategies applied in minority neighborhoods and the territories of the United States, including Puerto Rico, represent an obstacle to the social survival of Indigenous and Black epistemologies in educational spaces in the Americas: control of knowledge and colonial subjugation. The situation also applies to Latin American countries colonized by Spain and other Eurocentric settlers.

Control of knowledge

Scheurich and Young (1997) affirm that the epistemologies existing in educational institutions are based on the reproduction of interpretive methods based on epistemological racism. Therefore, they are based on how the ascendant culture built its coexisting experiences with scientific racism and with the sole purpose of maintaining the dominant culture as the only "real world" and put all other cultures on the "margin" to satisfy their desire for superiority (p. 8). This is a critical problem that scholars encounter where the ontological interpretation of racist epistemologies seizes the spaces of knowledge. This epistemological racism corresponds to the experience of the creation of Eurocentric knowledge where racism is the ignition or the primary source for reproducing educational philosophies based on the civilizational racism to which we have all been normalized. America's controls of knowledge are a kind of violence that goes beyond racism, bigotry, misogynist, and oppression, and all efforts are concentrated on erasing and replacing everything that is nonwhite. The Eurocentric academy rewards only those who exhibit allegiance to whiteness (Grodreau, 2015; Lloréns, 2014; Negrón-Montilla, 1975; and Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). Lastly, resources, benefits, and opportunities are designed primarily for white, affluent communities, not for the neighborhoods and territories where the American empire reproduces colonial subjects (Tuck & Yang, 2012). At this level, the logic of white supremacy treats nonwhites as strangers without purpose other than to reflect the white settler colonizer as the authoritative power who determines moral values.

Colonial subjugation

Grosfoguel (2003) situated Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rico as part of the process of modernization, where he reinterprets Puerto Rico's geopolitical position within the American empire as colonial/racial subjects supporting the American capitalist system. This situation is not

unique to Puerto Ricans living on the island, as this also affects other colonial subjects living in the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Palau Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and U.S. Virgin Islands. This is a condition that is replicated far and wide everywhere the United States exercises its political, economic, and legislative power, and uses the educational system as part of a broader strategy for maintaining its influence (Spring, 2016). The systemic structures of domination, which adheres to racist and Orientalist ideologies, serve as the instruments for the settler colonizer to reproduce “colonial subjects” as part of a plan of civilization under the pretext of modernization. Under the logic of white supremacy, the settler colonizer needs to produce subjects (*súbditos*) to serve white supremacists. The etymology of “subjects” or “*súbditos*” is a person under control or dominion of another, also to render submissive or dependent an individual or nation without constituents’ rights (Oxford University Press (OUP), 2020).

Contextualizing colonial subjects under the white settler colonial logic depends on two components. First, the white nation is the one that can have the full benefits of society, which in this analysis I am referring to as the United States. However, the same applies to Eurocentric empires before the American colonization, that is, Spanish rule in Puerto Rico. Second, the colonial subjects are dehumanized, as they are objects defined by their “slaveability”, that is the possibility that enslavement can be a permanent condition attached to their colonial subject status (Hudson, 2017; and Smith, A. 2012). Under this logic, the white settler colonizer seeks absolute loyalty to the empire, using national symbols to enshrine white power. All the Eurocentric empires used their national symbols, like their language, religion, constitution, flag, and army, to subordinate other nations within; the American empire is not the sole user of Americanization in education to maintain its hegemonic power.

To overcome abyssal thinking and Eurocentrism in the university, it is necessary to decolonize knowledge production and teaching. This involves recognizing the value and validity of non-Western knowledge and incorporating it into the curriculum. It also requires rethinking the very foundations of the university, including its epistemological assumptions, research methodologies, and pedagogical practices. By embracing a more diverse and inclusive approach to knowledge production and teaching, the university can become a more equitable and transformative space for all.

Theme 3: Fascist-patriotic education and approximation to whiteness

Puerto Rico has a complex relationship with imperial forces, particularly with the United States. The island was claimed by Spain in 1493 during Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the Americas and was a Spanish colony for nearly four centuries. In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, the United States defeated Spain and claimed control of Puerto Rico, making it a U.S. territory (Malavet, 2004; and Duany, 2002). Since then, Puerto Rico has had a complex relationship with the United States as a colonial territory. Many Puerto Ricans have sought greater political autonomy, including independence, while others have advocated for statehood.

The relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States has been marked by political, economic, and social tensions, with Puerto Ricans experiencing discrimination and unequal treatment under U.S. rule; "The 1776 Report" revises historical moments where a white polity forced a worldview—fascism—and elitist polity in colleges, universities, churches and every governmental entity (Brockell, 2021). Fascism is based in part on the protection of the white society's interest in imposing a socioeconomic culture, language, and philosophy. This apparent progress for the dominating groups represents misfortune for dominated civilizations. Puerto

Rico has survived genocide by submitting to civilizational racism and assimilation and working clandestinely against colonialism (Del Moral, 2013).

Del Moral (2013) documents the clandestine resistance of professors, students, and higher education administration whose academic work against colonialism disrupted the taken-for-granted ways of conceptualizing the history of Puerto Rico as objective, neutral, and within the logic of white settler society and *criollos* (a descendant group of Spanish settlers). This dominating society has used white settler entitlement and power to shape the academic philosophy under the guise of an “innocent” modernizing empire.

Hierarchy of knowledge, as national identity’s proximity to whiteness

Spring (2023) outlines Eurocentric educational philosophy, which emerged during the colonial period to maintain the superiority and dominance of European culture and knowledge. According to the position of “The 1776 Report” and Spanish academics, genocide, racism, and the rejection of other knowledge was justified as part of a divine “universal” philosophy. This ideology placed European history, culture, values, and ways of thinking at the center of the educational curriculum, while marginalizing and disregarding the knowledge, history, and experiences of non-European cultures.

As a result, the Eurocentric education system created a hierarchy of knowledge, in which European knowledge was seen as superior and more valuable, while the knowledge and experiences of non-European cultures were seen as inferior and less valuable. This led to the imposition of a “whiteness as a standard” mentality, where people of color were encouraged to assimilate to European cultural norms and values to be considered “educated” or “civilized.” This Eurocentric education policy also imposed a patriotic education that focused on the glorification of European history and the nation-state, while ignoring or downplaying the

contributions of non-European cultures and peoples. This type of education reinforces the dominant power structures and perpetuates the marginalization of nonwhite populations. Furthermore, this Eurocentric education system fails to address adequately the unique experiences and perspectives of nonwhite populations, hindering their ability to fully understand and engage with their own cultural heritage and history. This can lead to a lack of representation and a sense of invisibility in the educational system, which can have negative impacts on the self-esteem and identity formation of nonwhite students. To summarize, the primacy of approximation to whiteness as an educational policy reinforces Eurocentric ideologies and perpetuates the marginalization of nonwhite populations, hindering their intellectual and social development.

Hispanophilia and Americanization started as the only purpose of higher education when Peru's University of San Marcos was founded in the 1500s by the Spanish and Harvard University was founded by Puritans in the 1600s, respectively. So, the expansion of white settler colonialism and Eurocentric academia were shoulder to shoulder, exterminating and exploiting Indigenous knowledge to take by force the land in the name of a divine order. Now, let us dive in how Hispanic and American identities are still perpetuating colonialism and abyssal thinking, and hindering nonwhite epistemologies.

Hispanophilia

Latinos and Hispanics (Spanish descendants) who are proud of colonization as a necessary tool for the modernization of the Americas use Hispanophilia as the sentimental view of an innocent empire that brought civilization, culture, language, religion to the Americas (Tuck & Yang, 2012). In fact, the Spanish empire implemented the same slavocracy logic in Puerto Rico and its colonies as nothing more than the imposition of Eurocentric, Spanish cultural heritage as

a commodity of whiteness. Examining this logic is essential, as it forces us to delve further in the concepts of “Black-white binary” and “ethnicity.” Smith, A. (2012) and Glenn (2012) refer to ethnicity as the interactions among groups marked by differences in culture and language, and race refers to groups supposedly marked by visible differences in color. The latter distinction allows racism to be seen as a conflict of inequity in conjunction with the relationship to whiteness, a problem that is overlooked in groups who have ethnic differences. So, looking at the educational problems Americanization brings, fascism in institutions makes the racial problem only one of Black groups or of people whose physical characteristics are distinctively Black. When this problem is caused by the logic of white ideology, it activates internal colonialism in ethnic groups, so they do not see the racial problem as the primary concern of their oppression. The settler colonialism framework racially categorizes you as either white (a group they will protect) or nonwhite (a group they will colonize or extinguish) as a logic of seizing establishing property rights over land and resources. Understanding these premises is critical for ethnic groups to see beyond the uniqueness of their particular history of oppression and in promoting cross-cultural alliances.

Americanization

Americanization at the University Puerto Rico refers to the process of aligning the island’s educational system with that of the mainland United States. This began with the U.S. takeover of Puerto Rico in 1898 and was solidified with the establishment of the University of Puerto Rico in 1903. The university was modeled after American universities, with a strong emphasis on liberal arts and the natural sciences. Since then, Americanization has continued to shape the island’s higher education system. Unfortunately, this process has negative effects in shaping a Eurocentric pedagogy throughout the island’s educational landscape.

Negrón-De Montilla (1975) argues that the educational policies imposed on Puerto Rico made Puerto Ricans colonial subjects immediately after the American invasion. Among the practices that Americanization imposed on Puerto Ricans through education was the patriotic exercise of pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States and the celebration of patriotic federal holidays such as the Fourth of July. The failure to observe these practices is considered a possibly treasonous act against the United States. The same requirements are foisted upon students in U.S. schools who do not share the same patriotic identity and ideation of the United States; thus, they are de facto “cultural subjects” who do not deserve the same constitutional rights as white Americans.

Navarro (2002) shows that textbooks were meant to create tropical Yankees in the early years of Americanization in Puerto Rico. According to white supremacy logic, the settler colonizer considers Puerto Rican cultural and educational systems as Oriental, lesser than its supposedly superior American educational philosophy. These are the problems that Eurocentric empires create in which colonial subjects cannot achieve sovereignty because they depend on the white philosophical canon due to their acceptance of their learned inferiority. Continuing with these applications of white supremacist logic, colonial subjects will never be constituents, nor are they capable of enjoying the full rights of citizenship.

Theme 4: *Bombazo* Epistemology a Syllabus of Survival

Malavet (2004), Negrón-Montilla (1975), and Spring (2023) argue that the school system is not intended to inspire citizens with a complete comprehension of constitutional rights; instead, they are positioned as second-class citizens and cannot aspire to the ruling class’s equal treatment. Overarching this study is the question of what can emancipate Puerto Rico from its current antagonistic situation in which it seems Puerto Rico will be a land with no Puerto Ricans

in the future. I was scared initially when I started this endeavor, but my ancestors and family did not abandon me. When I opened my mind to this situation very far from my land, I realized that I needed to do something that would continue supporting my people, my Indigeneity, and my Blackness. This was when I understood that beyond the methods and methodologies of academia, there is the knowledge of my people.

Tejada (2019) explained the experience of this knowledge when she did her work about the Puerto Rican *Bomba* as a genre that is categorized under the folkloric music of Puerto Rico. The reality is that *Bomba* is not only a genre. It is, in fact, the Indigenous tradition that was transferred from the Taínos ancestors to our generation. The Afrocentric Indigenous family influenced the tradition. Together with the Taínos, African descendants created an alliance of epistemologies that has sustained the Puerto Ricans in the last centuries. The *Bomba* tradition emerged in the Puerto Rican family tradition as a way to remember our Indigenous and Afrocentric roots and resist the colonial empire. Social media was the vehicle to demonstrate the agency that colonial subjects in Puerto Rico can promote when they are united in the same goal. Protests forced Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rosselló (2017–19) to resign, but that did not end the current deplorable situation that Puerto Ricans are experiencing with limited access to resources to establish a decent life. In the case of the *Bomba* movement, the Eurocentric academy has often neglected or marginalized the contributions and significance of this cultural expression. The *Bomba* movement, with its African and Indigenous roots, is often excluded from traditional academic disciplines and cultural institutions that are based on Eurocentric models. This exclusion can contribute to a lack of recognition and appreciation for the cultural significance of *Bomba*, as well as a neglect of the experiences and contributions of Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous communities in Puerto Rico.

***Bomba* ceremony as resistance to white settler colonialism**

The *Bomba* movement is a cultural and artistic expression that originated in Puerto Rico in the 17th century. *Bomba* as a dance and percussion style rooted in Taíno and African Indigenous cultural traditions can liberate Boricuas from oppression. *Bomba* as a ceremony is often associated with resistance to colonial oppression and slavery. It has continued to evolve and flourish in Puerto Rican communities on the island and in the diaspora and is recognized as an important element of Puerto Rican cultural heritage. However, in recent years, there have been efforts to promote a more inclusive and diverse approach to education and cultural expression in Puerto Rico. The recognition and incorporation of Caribbean and Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives, including the *Bomba* movement, has become increasingly important in efforts to move beyond the limitations of the Eurocentric academy and to promote a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of Puerto Rican history and culture.

However, when I cross-reference this evolution from a Eurocentric worldview with the stances that staff of the 45th President's Advisory 1776 Commission took to produce "The 1776 Report," I encountered the reality that people of color are included as second-class citizens. Puerto Ricans and Indigenous peoples are erased from the narrative, like we never existed, even more, that we do not exist! The Caribbean was wiped off the world map. This is violent genocide and racist rhetoric that erases Puerto Ricans as distinct people from the American nation. The 45th president tried to erase what other presidents before him tried to do to acknowledge the country's bloody past of institutionalized genocide and structural and systemic inequities.

Along the same lines, distinguished faculty representing Spain and the Hispanic polity of the European academy who developed "The 1776 Report" and documentary *España la primera globalización* are subtly, but actively designing new frameworks to hide the true nature of the

academy, which is violent and radical. Both “The 1776 Report” and the *España la primera globalización* documentary erase Puerto Rico and the Caribbean from historical narratives and educational materials. This position solidifies the otherized frame of fellow “Americans” by Negrón-Montaner (2018). This erasure reinforces the idea that the experiences and contributions of these communities are unimportant or insignificant, and it contributes to a broader pattern of cultural erasure and exclusion.

My cross-examination of claims in the report and documentary shows how abyssal thinking and Eurocentrism are interconnected. Eurocentrism perpetuates the marginalization of non-Western knowledge and reinforces the hierarchical relationship between the West and the rest of the world. This exclusionary model of knowledge production has significant implications for the education system, as it reinforces social inequality, erases cultural diversity, and perpetuates colonial power relations. The theories examined in this chapter give an excellent foundation for understanding the logic of white settler colonialism. In principle, one theory is not enough to address the issue, nor is one approach or one method. The rationale behind this is that the Indigenous world is different and not compatible with the narrow-minded academic theories that perpetuate Eurocentrism and maintain white supremacists’ intense and obscure desire to steal from and murder Indigenous people and enslave Blacks. Therefore, this chapter has served as an introduction to the discussion of the findings in the next chapters.

Chapter Summary

In this section, I evaluated the tensions between the theories, narratives, and discussions used to frame logics of privilege in support of white settler colonialism. Puerto Rico’s higher education system has a unique history and culture, shaped by the island’s colonial history, economic challenges, and social struggles. There has been significant debate and reform efforts

aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of higher education on the island. This study seeks to define the unexplored issues buried by dominating narratives resulting from the imposition of Eurocentric epistemologies on Puerto Rico's education system and how they calculatedly perpetuate current colonial conditions as a territory of the United States and as the oldest colony in the world. Hispanic and American epistemologies have forced us to embrace white culture. However, we are not white, and even the definition of white is categorized as part of the Americanization that Puerto Rican intellectuals reject because of their identification with the Hispanic culture of Spain. As this work is conceptual in nature, reconceptualization of the narratives was the foundational goals of delineating emancipatory theories and demanding the right of Indigenous peoples to name their own worldview. *Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazo* epistemology are delineated in the conceptual model as the producers of knowledge, nurturing the epistemological truth as a syllabus for survival for Puerto Ricans.

CHAPTER V: DISSENT

“If you can control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. When you determine what a man shall think, you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man, feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man, think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.” – Carter Godwin Woodson, (1933) *The Miseducation of the Negro*

Following Santos’ (2014) advice, “as academics and intellectuals, we need to be aware of the deep stories of such debates, the long term (*longue durée*), and the types of prejudices that compromise solutions... such solutions need to afford dignity for people...” (p. 17). The reality is that this discussion occurs in all spheres where settler colonialism wants to preserve its hegemonic power. I disagree with Puerto Rico’s current colonial status and policies that are not conducive to decolonization for Puerto Ricans. Decolonization is the process of ending colonial rule and achieving independence for the colonized territory. In the case of Puerto Rico, decolonization must start ideologically to become a reality. The island has been a territory of the United States since 1898, when it was acquired from Spain as a result of the Spanish-American War. During this long period of U.S. control, Puerto Rico has been an unincorporated territory, that has not been granted full statehood or independence. The white supremacists’ obsession with maintaining absolute authoritarian rule has allowed for the evolution of Americanization, patriotism, and Hispanophilia as blatantly fascist behavior and modern additions to the spectrum of tools to preserve whiteness. Day by day, white settler colonialism uses the education system and the academy as an instrument to reproduce Eurocentrism as the only legitimate philosophy (Grosfoguel et al., 2016; Spring, 2016). A recap of the arguments and concepts addressed in this work follows.

First, using suitable theoretical frameworks, I reconceptualized epistemologies that have dispossessed Indigenous people of their sovereign right to name their cosmovision of the world. I presented discourses and debates and analyzed them according to the power relations they have uncovered. And I revered the cosmovision of our murdered Indigenous ancestors who nonetheless handed down the vivacity we as Caribbean people have today. White settlers sustained intertwined systems of oppression in the stolen lands by executing hegemonic agendas of white education and monolithic institutions to preserve white elites Occidentalizing the academy, and the academy portraying nonwhites as Oriental to the West (Said, 1994). Said (1994) justified the West's material domination of the "other" and, in this way, suggested the collaboration between Orientalism as both scholarly discourse and imperial institution. Earlier, Foucault (1980) recognized the role of these relationships of power and states:

"... there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize, and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation, and functioning of a discourse" (p. 93).

Second, at the heart of this intra- and transdisciplinary study is the long history of white settler colonialism philosophy as an elitist polity through educational technologies of accommodation that justify the white monolithic society's metaphysics as universal and infallible. Whiteness as a structure of knowledge represents an elite group as the originators of narratives, spatial hierarchies that conceive the world as white and nonwhite, and a culture that is irrefutable, unique, universal, standard, pure, innocent, eternal, and modern. The goal of white monolithic society is to keep nonwhite groups governed, divided, and hopeless; its polity is portrayed as superior. Elitists function as an anticipatory regime where minorities' future is predestined not to fit in the structures of the world that they have created.

Third, as an imperial institution, white supremacy scholarly discourses strive to expand their hegemonic thinking and philosophy to justify slavocracy, genocide, and Orientalism in the past, present, and future using anticipatory regimes. Anticipatory regimes, like any strategy, maintains the hegemony of white monolithic culture and the marginalization of nonwhites. White settler colonialism is still hindering decolonization, emancipation, and sovereignty rights by resurrecting the history of the past-present with a new wave of scholarly discourses. Through the experiences gained in working on my dissertation, I have learned that inter- and transdisciplinary emancipatory scholarship plays a prime role in resisting and contesting white supremacist discourses, giving a voice to the voiceless and fighting injustices committed by representatives of the dominant culture. It is essential to bring to the fore the historical, sociopolitical, economic, and academic background that led to the inequality of powers defined by the dominant discourses still debated in the academy today (Dei, 2012; Santos, 2014). The evidence found in the traces of brutal crimes against Indigenous civilization persists in the logic of the deliberate omission of their historiography in the rhetoric of white supremacists to sustain their forms of dominations and power dynamics as legitimate ones.

To unpack how white supremacists take advantage of settler colonialism knowledge systems to marginalize nonwhite populations, it is necessary to see that their logics are grounded in the notion that a better world must perpetuate Eurocentrism. With that awareness, white settler colonialism rests on the history of Eurocentrism because it continues perpetuating imperialist knowledge; so, the white monolithic narratives continue dominating the future. Therefore, capitalism and education systems are the structures used to implement civilizational racism, war land dispossession, slavocracy, ethnic cleansing, and erasure. In this research, I addressed the structural foundations that whiteness has built to maintain its hegemony, forms of power, and

anticipatory regimes to control the future as a legitimate mode of government. The empire started with settlers that seemed innocent, religious, and well-wishing; for every white settler, colonialism is a white settlement, which is different from migration as the mechanism to occupy land and implementing superstructures of oppression such as law, education systems, and economic expansion. Emancipatory theories support my investigation, especially intersectionality, and there is an intersectional group of Indigenous people who will resist until white settler colonialism is rooted out.

The complexity of the Puerto Rican phenomena requires a multifocal lens to address the underlying issues that have kept our nation colonized, hostage of Eurocentric epistemologies. However, we have been indoctrinated in the same way. The ancestral wisdom is in us, waiting for us. Therefore, as a matriarch, Indigenous, and African descent daughter of the Higher One, I am committed to continuing to fulfill my calling. The Taíno and African descendants' knowledge is not in books, even when the colonizers think that they have depicted everything about us in the fields of anthropology, eugenics and museum studies. The ancestral knowledge of my people is close to me and reveals itself to me in dreams, songs, poems, and the sweet memories of my childhood. So, I have decided to go and meet with my people.

I visit social media groups with other elders and doctors in academia. I learn about their work, and I have enriched my life with new strengths. The elders told me prophecy is revealed by dreams and visions that help me I understand where I belonged. The academy will never understand the ways of knowledge of my people. It is impossible to put it in methods, methodology, and theories based in their Eurocentric methods. However, there are many scholars that become PhD academics; the experience of not belonging was precisely what they needed to open their eyes to the world to which we belong.

Future research and activism

Working on this study, I have been encouraged to continue believing in social justice, to not lose sight of what I see and what I have experienced, good or bad—everything works for the good. There is work to be done to emancipate Indigenous and Afrocentric communities in the Caribbean. It is a work that needs to be in alliance with Indigenous and African descendant people.

My future research plans include some of these themes:

1. **Transcolonial feminist theory in the Caribbean Archipelago.** Because Caribbean societies are matriarch in nature, I wish to pursue transdisciplinary work that can showcase the voices of feminist activist scholars who have resisted patriarchal ideologies.
2. ***Bomba* ceremony and *Bombazo* epistemologies that are replicated in the transcolonial spaces of the other sister islands.** Diasporic movement has been ignored by dominant narratives. Thus, a full ethnographic study is needed to understand current Indigenous ways of knowing that have prevailed over the larger story of Caribbean colonialism.

As a future scholar activist, I would welcome a congress of Taíno scholars and *Bomba* academic activists to continue producing knowledge in alliance and solidarity. Because we, the Taínos, are alive! Furthermore, we are not going anywhere.

¡Ancestros!

Hasta aquí mi Bombazo. Pero seguiremos delineando nuevo conocimiento al son de la Bomba.

REFERENCES

- Abadia-Rexach, B. I. (2012). *Musicalizando la raza*. Ediciones Puerto, Inc.
- Abbad Y Lasierra, I., & Acosta, J. J. (1885). *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la Isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*.
- Alegria, R. (1997). The Study of Aboriginal Peoples: Multiple Ways of Knowing. In S. Wilson (Ed.), *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean* (pp. 9–19). University Press of Florida.
- Alegria, R. E. (1984). Ball Courts and Ceremonial Plazas in the West Indies. *Anthropologica*, 26(1), 86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25605146>
- Althusser, L. (1970). Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. *Notes Pour Une Recherche*.
- Amsler, S., & Facer, K. (2017). Contesting anticipatory regimes in education: exploring alternative educational orientations to the future. *Futures*, 94, 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.01.001>
- Anatol, G. L. (2015). *The Things That Fly in the Night: Female Vampires in Literature of the Circum-Caribbean and African Diaspora (Critical Caribbean Studies)* (None). Rutgers University Press.
- Ani, M. (1994). *Yurugu: An Afrikan-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. Nkonimfo Publications.
- Aponte, G. (1985). *San Mateo de Cangrejos: comunidad cimarrona en Puerto Rico*.
- Arvin, M., Tuck, E., & Morrill, A. (2013). Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy. *Feminist Formations*, 25(1), 8–34. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2013.0006>
- Baralt, G. A. (1985). *Esclavos Rebeldes: Conspiraciones y Sublevaciones de Esclavos En Puerto Rico (1795-1873)*.

- Barea, R. E., & Espada, A. (2022). *Imperiofobia y leyenda negra. Roma, Rusia, Estados Unidos y el Imperio español (Spanish Edition)*. Ediciones Siruela.
- Barreiro, J. (1996). The Cacique's Prayer: Taino Journal. *Native Americans*.
- Barton, H. (2004). A Challenge For Puerto Rican Music: How To Build A Soberao For Bomba. *Centro Journal*, XVI(1), 68–89.
- Bascara, V. (2014). New Empire, Same Old University? *The Imperial University*, 53–78.
<https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816680894.003.0002>
- Bascomb, L. T. (2019). *In Plenty and in Time of Need: Popular Culture and the Remapping of Barbadian Identity (Critical Caribbean Studies)* (None). Rutgers University Press.
- Batista-Kunhardt, G. (2022, February 18). *Beyond Paper Genocide: Taino Recognition in Puerto Rico*. Brown Political Review. <https://brownpoliticalreview.org/2022/02/beyond-paper-genocide/>
- BBC News. (2020, June 11). Confederate and Columbus statues toppled by US protesters. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53005243>
- Bell, D. (1970). *Race, Racism, and American Law*.
- Benítez-Rojo, A. B. (1985). La isla que se repite: para una reinterpretación de la cultura caribeña. *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 429, 115–132.
<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=160647>
- Bhambra, G. (2015). *Settler Colonialism*. Global Social Theory.
<https://globalsocialtheory.org/concepts/settler-colonialism/>
- Birkenmaier, A. (Ed.). (2020). *Caribbean Migrations: The Legacies of Colonialism*. Rutgers University Press.

- Bofil-Calero, J. O. (2014). Bomba, danza, calipso y merengue: Creación del espacio social en las fiestas de Santiago Apóstol de Loíza. *Latin American Music Review*, 35(1), 115–138.
<https://doi.org/10.7560/lamr35105>
- Botkin, F. R. (2017). *Thieving Three-Fingered Jack: Transatlantic Tales of a Jamaican Outlaw, 1780-2015*. Rutgers University Press.
- Brau, S. (1894). *Puerto Rico y su historia*. Forgotten Books.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE Publications.
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005). Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425–446.
- Brockell, G. (2021, January 20). ‘A hack job,’ ‘outright lies’: Trump commission’s ‘1776 Report’ outrages historians. *Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/01/19/1776-report-historians-trump/>
- Bruno, S. (2022). “Yo la bomba no la bailé, la bomba yo la vivé” (I Didn’t Just Dance Bomba, I Lived It): The Pedagogy of Daily Puerto Rican Life, Black Feminist Praxis, and the Batey. *Transforming Anthropology*, 30(2), 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/traa.12242>
- Brusi Gil De Lamadrid, R. (2021). *Chulos de la Pobreza: Y Otras Crónicas*. Editora Educación Emergente.
- Brusi-Gil De Lamadrid, R. (2011). The University of Puerto Rico: A Testing Ground for the Neoliberal State. *Nacla Report on the Americas*, 44(2), 7–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2011.11722160>
- Cavanagh, E., & Veracini, L. (2017). *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*. Taylor & Francis.

- Chatterjee, P., & Maira, S. (2014). *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (1st ed.). Univ Of Minnesota Press.
- Collins, J. W., O'Brien, N. P., & Snow, C. E. (2003). *The Greenwood Dictionary of Education*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cornelissen, J. (2016). Editor's Comments: Developing Propositions, a Process Model, or a Typology? Addressing the Challenges of Writing Theory Without a Boilerplate. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0196>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics [1989]. *Feminist Legal Theory*, 57–80. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5>
- Crenshaw, K. (2019). *On Intersectionality: The Essential Writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw*. The New Press.
- Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (1996). *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*. The New Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Cropanzano, R. (2009). Writing Nonempirical Articles for Journal of Management: General Thoughts and Suggestions. *Journal of Management*, 35(6), 1304–1311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309344118>

- Dei, G. J. S. (2012). Indigenous anti-colonial knowledge as ‘heritage knowledge’ for promoting Black/African education in diasporic contexts. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1). <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/viewFile/18631/15559>
- Del Moral, S. (2013). *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Delbridge, R., & Fiss, P. C. (2013). Editors’ Comments: Styles of Theorizing and the Social Organization of Knowledge. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(3), 325–331.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2013.0085>
- Denoon, D. (1979). Understanding settler societies*. *Historical Studies*, 18(73), 511–527.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10314617908595611>
- Díaz-Quñones, A. (1993). *La memoria rota*. Ediciones Huracan.
- Duany, J. (2002). *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2014). *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People (ReVisioning History for Young People Book 2)*. Beacon Press.
- Eco, U. (1986). *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language (Advances in Semiotics)* (Reprint). Indiana University Press.
- Elkins, C., & Pedersen, S. (2009). *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*. Routledge.
- Feliciano-Santos, S. (2021). *A Contested Caribbean Indigeneity: Language, Social Practice, and Identity Within Puerto Rican Taino Activism*. Amsterdam University Press.

- Fernandez-Cobo, M., Jobes, D., Yanagihara, R., Nerurkar, V., Yamamura, Y., Ryschkewitsch, C., & Stoner, G. (2001). Reconstruction Population History Using JC Virus: Amerinds, Spanish, and Africans in the Ancestry of Modern Puerto Ricans. *Human Biology*, 73(3).
- Flores, M. (1995). Cronología política y cultural de Puerto Rico. *Iberoamericana*, 21(67/67), 179–198.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Van Haren Publishing.
- Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Van Haren Publishing.
- Fulmer, I. S. (2012). Editor's Comments: The Craft of Writing Theory Articles—Variety and Similarity in *AMR*. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(3), 327–331.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2012.0026>
- Gillespie, A., & Cornish, F. (2010). Intersubjectivity: Towards a Dialogical Analysis. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 40(1), 19–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2009.00419.x>
- Gilson, L., & Goldberg, C. S. (2015). Editors' Comment. *Group & Organization Management*, 40(2), 127–130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601115576425>
- Glenn, E. N. (2012). Settler Colonialism as Structure. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(1), 52–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214560440>
- Global Press Journal. (2020, October 19). *Puerto Rican Indigenous Communities Seek Recognition, Return of Their Ancestral Lands*.
<https://globalpressjournal.com/americas/puerto-rico/puerto-rican-indigenous-communities-seek-recognition-return-ancestral-lands/>

- Godreau, I. P. (2015). *Scripts of Blackness: Race, Cultural Nationalism, and U.S. Colonialism in Puerto Rico (Global Studies of the United States)* (1st ed.). University of Illinois Press.
- Gomez-Tejera, C., & Cruz-Lopez, D. (1970). *La Escuela Puertorriquena*. Troutman Press.
- González, L. (2009). *Historia de Puerto Rico (Antillas) (Spanish Edition)*.
- Goodenow, R. K. (2018). The Foundations of American Imperial Education. *Revista Española De Educación Comparada*. <https://doi.org/10.5944/reec.31.2018.21591>
- Grande, S. (2018). Refusing the University. *Toward What Justice?*, 47–65.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351240932-4>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2003). *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective* (First). University of California Press.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2013). The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and the Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 11(1), 8.
<https://www.okcir.com/Articles%20XI%201/Grosfoguel.pdf>
- Grosfoguel, R., Hernández, R., & Velásquez, E. R. (2016). *Decolonizing the Westernized University: Interventions in Philosophy of Education from Within and Without*.
- Guba, E. G. (1970). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17–30). Sage Publication.
- Haczek, Á. R. (2022, October 10). ¿Qué ha sido de las estatuas de Cristóbal Colón en América Latina y Estados Unidos? *CNN*. <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/09/07/que-ha-sido-de-las-estatuas-de-cristobal-colon-en-america-latina/>
- Hamilton, N. W. (2019). *Phonographic Memories: Popular Music and the Contemporary Caribbean Novel*. Rutgers University Press.

- Hannah-Jones, N., Magazine, T. N. Y. T., Roper, C., Silverman, I., & Silverstein, J. (2021). *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*. Penguin Random House.
- Hignett, K. (2018, February 20). Taíno: “Extinct” Indigenous Americans Never Actually Disappeared, Ancient Tooth Reveals. *Newsweek*. <https://www.newsweek.com/taino-caribbean-indigenous-people-extinct-812729>
- Hola! (2022, May 24). Se estrena el documental “España, la primera globalización.” *HOLA*. <https://www.hola.com/us-es/entretenimiento/20220524333025/estreno-documental-espana-primera-globalizacion/>
- Hudson, S. (2017). *New Framings on Anti-Racism and Resistance: Indigenous & Black Solidarity in Practice: #BLMTOtentCity*. *SensePublishers EBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-950-8>
- Jaakkola, E. (2020). Designing conceptual articles: four approaches. *AMS Review*, 10(1–2), 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00161-0>
- Johnson, M. A. (2018). *Becoming Creole: Nature and Race in Belize*. Rutgers University Press.
- Khan, A. (2020). *Far from Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean (Critical Caribbean Studies)* (Critical). Rutgers University Press.
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Reprint). University of Toronto Press.
- Lara, A. (2020). *Streetwalking: LGBTQ Lives and Protest in the Dominican Republic*. Rutgers University Press.
- Lionnet, F. (2000). Transnationalism, Postcolonialism or Transcolonialism? Reflections on Los Angeles, Geography, and the Uses of Theory. *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media & Composite Cultures*, 10(1), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713665785>

- Lloréns, H. (2014). *Imaging the great Puerto Rican family: Framing nation, race, and render during the American century*. Lexington Books.
- Lomawaima, T. K., & McCarty, T. L. (2006). *“To Remain an Indian”: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education (Multicultural Education Series)* (Illustrated). Teachers College Press.
- López-Linares, J. L. (Director). (2021, December). *España, la primera globalización* (documentary) [Unlimited streaming]. IMDB.
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14011090/?ref_=tt_mv_desc
- MacInnis, D. J. (2011). A Framework for Conceptual Contributions in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 136–154. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.4.136>
- Malavet, P. A. (2004). *America’s Colony: The Political and Cultural Conflict between the United States and Puerto Rico (Critical America, 43)* (50241st ed.). NYU Press.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2008). *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity (Latin America Otherwise)*. Duke University Press Books.
- Martínez-Cruzado, J. C., Toro-Labrador, G., Ho-Fung, V., Estévez-Montero, M. A., Lobaina-Manzanet, A., Padovani-Claudio, D. A., Sánchez-Cruz, H., Ortiz-Bermúdez, P., & Sánchez-Crespo, A. (2001). Mitochondrial DNA Analysis Reveals Substantial Native American Ancestry in Puerto Rico. *Human Biology*, 73(4), 491–511.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/hub.2001.0056>
- Mays, K. T. (2021). *An Afro-Indigenous History of the United States*. Beacon Press.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Amsterdam University Press.

- Morgan, H. (2022). Resisting the Movement to Ban Critical Race Theory from Schools. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 95(1), 35–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2021.2025023>
- National Education Policy Center. (2020, November 26). *What is Tribal Crit?* Retrieved February 1, 2021, from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/newsletter-tribalcrit>
- Navarro, J. M. (2002). *Creating Tropical Yankees: Social Science Textbooks and U.S. Ideological Control in Puerto Rico, 1898-1908*. Taylor & Francis.
- Neeganagwedgin, E. (2020). Indigenous systems of knowledge and transformative learning practices: turning the gaze upside down. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 14(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2019.1652815>
- Negrón-Montaner, F. (2009). *Sovereign Acts: Contesting Colonialism Across Indigenous Nations and Latinx America*.
- Negrón-Montaner, F. (2018, January 10). *Our Fellow Americans*. Dissent Magazine.
https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/our-fellow-americans-puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-colonialism-rhetoric
- Negrón-Montilla, A. (1975). *Americanization in Puerto Rico and the Public-school System, 1900-1930*. University of Puerto Rico Press.
- Neuman, G. L. (2010). *Strangers to the Constitution: Immigrants, Borders, and Fundamental Law*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Osuna, J. J. (1975). *A History of Education in Puerto Rico*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Paracumbé – Bomba Y Plena*. (1987). [Video]. <https://www.discogs.com/artist/5280721-Paracumb%C3%A9>

- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>
- Quijano, A., & Wallerstein, I. (1992). Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system. *Determinants of Development*, 549–557. <https://www.javeriana.edu.co/blogs/syie/files/Quijano-and-Wallerstein-Americanity-as-a-Concept.pdf>
- Ramos-Rosado, M. (2011). *Destellos de la negritud: Investigaciones caribeñas*.
- Reyes-Santos, A. (2015). *Our Caribbean Kin: Race and Nation in the Neoliberal Antilles*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Ricourt, M. (2016). *The Dominican Racial Imaginary: Surveying the Landscape of Race and Nation in Hispaniola (Critical Caribbean Studies)* (Illustrated). Rutgers University Press.
- Robinson, L. (2022, August 8). *Indigenous Taíno of Puerto Rico Take Their Fight to the UN*. Language Magazine. <https://www.languagemagazine.com/2022/08/08/indigenous-taino-of-puerto-rico-take-their-fight-to-the-un/>
- Rodríguez, D. (2012). Racial/Colonial Genocide and the “Neoliberal Academy”: In Excess of a Problematic. *American Quarterly*, 64(4), 809–813. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2012.0054>
- Rodríguez-Silva, I. (2012). *Silencing Race: Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico* (1st ed. 2012). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rosenberg, D. (2020). *Afropop Worldwide | Essay: On Bomba, Plena and Puerto Rican Protest Music*. Afropop Worldwide. <https://afropop.org/articles/essay-on-bomba-plena-and-puerto-rican-protest-music>
- Rouse, I. B. (1993). *The Tainos: Rise and Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus*. Yale University Press.

- Rufo, C. F. (2021, March 30). Critical Race Theory: What it Is and How to Fight it. *Imprimis*.
- Said, E. W. (1994). *Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient*. Penguin Books.
- Santos, B. (2010). The University in the Twenty-first Century: Toward a Democratic and Emancipatory University Reform. In Apple, Michael, Ball, Stephen, & Gandin (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 274–282). Routledge.
- Santos, B. D. S. (2006). Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges. *Research Foundations of State University of New York and on Behalf of the Fernand Braudel Center*, 30(1), 45–89. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241677>
- Santos, B. D. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Santos, B., Nunes, J., & Meneses, M. (2007). Introduction: Opening Up the Canon of Knowledge and Recognition of Difference. In B. Santos (Ed.), *Another knowledge is possible: Beyond Northern epistemologies* (pp. ix–lxii).
- Scarano, F. A. (2023). *Puerto Rico Cinco Siglos de Historia (4ta Edicion) (Softcover)* (4th ed.). Mc Graw Hill Interamericana Editores S.A. de C.V.
- Scheurich, J. J., & Young, M. D. (1997). Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased? *Educational Researcher*, 26(4), 4. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1176879>

- Schroeder, H., Sikora, M., Gopalakrishnan, S., Cassidy, L. M., Maisano Delsler, P., Sandoval Velasco, M., Schraiber, J. G., Rasmussen, S., Homburger, J. R., Ávila-Arcos, M. C., Allentoft, M. E., Moreno-Mayar, J. V., Renaud, G., Gómez-Carballa, A., Laffoon, J. E., Hopkins, R. J. A., Higham, T. F. G., Carr, R. S., Schaffer, W. C., . . . Willerslev, E. (2018). Origins and genetic legacies of the Caribbean Taino. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *115*(10), 2341–2346. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1716839115>
- Siegel, P. E. (1999). Contested Places and Places of Contest: The Evolution of Social Power and Ceremonial Space in Prehistoric Puerto Rico. *Latin American Antiquity*, *10*(3), 209–238. <https://doi.org/10.2307/972028>
- Smith, A. (2012). Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy. In O. LaBennett, D. Martinez-HoSang, & L. Pulido (Eds.), *Racial Formation in the twenty-first century* (pp. 66–101).
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Spring, J. (2016). *The American School, a Global Context, from the Puritans to the Obama Administration: Education, Education*. Cram101.
- Spring, J. (2023). *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality 5th (Fifth) Edition* by Spring (5th (Fifth) Edition). McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages.
- Steiner, S. (1974). *The Islands: The World of Puerto Ricans*. Harper & Row.
- Stokes, E. (2020). Beyond evidence: Anticipatory regimes in law. *Law & Policy*, *43*(1), 73–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12159>
- Subject: Oxford English Dictionary*. (2022). <https://www.oed.com/>
- Sued-Badillo, J. (1978). *La mujer indígena y su sociedad*.

- Taylor, A. C. (2017). “Water Overflows with Memory”: Bomba, Healing, and the Archival Oceanic. *Centro Journal*, XXXI(II).
- Tejada, E. (2019). *The Bomba of San Mateo De Cangrejo: The Historic Suppression of Bombero/as to Whiten Puerto Rico and Their On-Going Resistance* [PhD Dissertation]. California Institute of Integral Studies.
- Trouillot, M. R. (1995). *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1). <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18630>>
- Ugeto-Ponce, M. (2017). Curipe y San Mateo de Cangrejos: pueblos de negros libres y ejemplos contrahegemónicos del pensamiento afrocaribeno. *Humania Del Sur*, 12(22), 21–42.
- Valencia, R. R. (1997). *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Valentin, A. (2022, May 11). A failed commitment to promote inclusive education in Puerto Rico. *Los Angeles Blade*.
- Van De Ven, A. H. (1989). Nothing Is Quite So Practical as a Good Theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 486–489. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308370>
- Veracini, L. (2010). *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview (Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies)* (2010th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wallerstein, I. M. (1974). *The Modern World-system in the Longue Durée*. Macmillan Publishers.
- Weick, K. E. (1989). Theory Construction as Disciplined Imagination. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 516–531. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308376>

- Whetten, D. A. (1989). What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 490–495. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308371>
- White, H. (1978). *The tropics of discourse*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (F First Edition Used). Fernwood Publishing.
- Wilson, S. M. (1997). Introduction to the Study of the Indigenous People of the Caribbean. In S. M. Wilson (Ed.), *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean* (pp. 1–8).
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*. SAGE.
- Wolfe, P. (1999). *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnograph Event (Writing Past Imperialism)*. Continuum.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The Miseducation of the Negro*.
- Zien, K. A. (2017). *Sovereign Acts: Performing Race, Space, and Belonging in Panama and the Canal Zone (Critical Caribbean Studies)* (Illustrated). Rutgers University Press.